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THE

WANDERING JEW.

A TALE

OF THE TEN LOST TRIBES OF ISRAEL.

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BY

J. L. MAKEEVER.

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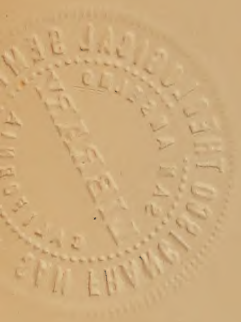

DEDICATION.

With sincere devotion this first fruit of my labor is laid on the altar of

FRIENDSHIP,

trusting that the waywardness of its thought and manner will be forgiven by the generous friends to whom it is dedicated by

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

In this little work I make no pretension to literary merit. I have written wholly for myself and the friends to whom this book may be presented. It is not my intention to sell a single volume, believing as I do that the pleasure I have had in the composition of this work has been a sufficient return for the cost of its publication in a form which I can more readily peruse; and with the trust that in after years I may look back upon my earlier life and feel that, even if the results be barren, the effort has been not wholly in vain. In the midst of a somewhat busy life, I have found many hours of enjoyment in the research and study which have led up to the expression found in these pages. The story of The Wandering Jew is not new. Other books have treated of the subject, but it has not been my fortune to read them. From many sources I have gathered the material for this work, mostly, however, from within the lids of The Book of books. In that Book, are romances of love I have not touched; there are bursts of music I have not heard; there are visions of war and peace and splendor I have seen but dimly; and then there are others I have seen and heard not at all. In this I speak of the Bible as a work of history, poetry and art, aside from its halo of divinity. The stories of Eve and Sarah and Rebekah and Rachel and Ada and

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Ruth and Esther and Judith—are they not types of womanhood eternal? And then there are others. I have but touched on the borderland of their greatness. I dare not enter therein. At another time and in another place I may. Beside these women of old, the heroine of the modern tale is an idle creation, contented with the vanities of the hour, while they were busied with the work of God and Israel; they the makers of history! The Wandering Jew has been with us through the centuries. Are his unresting feet even now not heard on the hills of the world, a potential energy, a type of that people which are, which were and which will be the same forever? I have used no machinery which, I believe, the times do not sanction; have made no statement in history which has not recorded mention. The Star of Bethlehem even now is said to be seen in the sky, and King Solomon's seal was as real to the olden Hebrew as the telegraphic key board is to us. I leave it as I found it, adrift in the legendary lore which gathers about the history of a forgotten people. This day in countless tents of the desert where dark-eyed Mussulmen sit, tales will be told of the Magi Solomon and his wonder-working seal. The verses of poetry, such as they are, are my own. I had intended publishing a volume of poems, but I defer it till another time. I wrote this work within a period of three months time, working of evenings. I have made no corrections in the original draft of the story, feeling my inability, at this time, to give it a more perfect shape. I expect no mention of praise from the critics should they chance to read these pages. No one can be more sensible of their defects than myself; at the present time, however, I can neither avoid nor correct them, but as the days go by I hope to write more worthily. If I have touched the harp of Israel with rude and impious hand, I reverently ask of the departed spirits which yet may guard its fallen greatness, the forgiveness which is due to one who looks off into the sacred past and hears the majestic tread and trumpet call, sounding grandly on above all the noise and tumult of this fretful time.

Osceola, Nebr., May, 1891.

Shall I like that gray-bearded seer,
Who lay within the cavern lone,
And saw the mighty God pass by;
Shall I yet smite the barren stone
And see the fountain welling forth?

Shall I upon the vaulted skies,
Read burning there the mystic words
Of Him who set the pillared fire
Against the blue dome of the North?

Shall there yet sweep some epic verse
Thrown from my rocking chords along
As o'er the stormy harp of old
Broke Homer's blind, immortal song?

Or from the windowed ark shall I
Unloose a dove of hope to bring
To me from o'er the far off years
No olive spray on drooping wing?

THE WANDERING JEW.

CHAPTER I.

MEETING WITH JOSEPH BAR ELIM.

It was up in the Wind River Mountains on such a night as this. The wind blew hoarse and hollow through the branches of the pine trees as I sat in my cabin filling my powder horn for the next day's hunt. Lion, my dog, lay opposite the fire and dozed and growled in his slumbers. I do not know why, but for an old mountaineer, a strange feeling came over me and after awhile even the dog grew restless and arose and walked back and forth to the door. I could not believe that there was danger from Indians, for at the Agencies all had quieted down and the last hostile had come in and surrendered; still, I feel like a homeless wanderer, and a vague unrest seemed to arise in my breast, I knew not what, such as comes sometimes to everyone far from home.

After awhile I heard a knock at the door and instantly I put out my light, seized my gun from its place on the wall and prepared for danger, for how could I know what mischief might be brewing? Lion sprang fiercely to the door, but I bid him be quiet and, sliding the bar across so as to bolt the door, I inquired who knocked.

A voice responded in English —"A wanderer seeks admission for a short rest."

I slid back the bolt and cautiously peering out I saw a

man, somewhat broken and bent, standing at the door. I relighted the lamp and opening the door, a man, whom I at first took for a tramp, entered and with a groan dropped into a seat.

"A wild night," said I.

"A wild world," said the man, with a marked Hebrew accent, and at once I observed that he was a Jew.

"What's the trouble," said I, with a marked accent on the word trouble.

"Trouble which is beyond the skill of man to mend or cure," said the Hebrew sadly; "I only desired," said the tramp, for he was evidently a tramp, "to rest a few moments and then to pass on."

"How long," said I, "have you been a tramp?"

Slowly the man arose and looking at me half reproachfully, half scornfully, said in a voice which showed a fire still smouldering beneath that wasted exterior—"Tramp, tramp, Joseph bar Elim, a tramp!" "Man," said he, turning upon me almost fiercely, "the day was when he whom you call a tramp could have bought you and half your tribe; when the name of Joseph bar Elim affixed to a bill of exchange would have passed current in the marts of the world. And yet I hear on every side those words, 'tramp, tramp!' Yes, put out your lights; I will pass on," and he arose and slowly and, as it seemed, painfully withdrew.

It was then but shortly after 8 o'clock and as the winter evenings were quite long, a curiosity arose in my mind to hear the man's story, for he showed that he still possessed a pride of spirit not altogether subdued by the shiftless life he had led; and I was also curious to learn how a Jew had become a tramp, since, as far as my experience had gone, the Jewish people had rarely, if ever, produced what might be termed a tramp. So I beckoned him to return to the seat he had just vacated and asked him to tell me his story.

Slowly the man returned as if carrying some heavy burden, and, having retaken the chair, he placed his walking stick across his

knees. The man could not have been above 35 years of age, but he looked at least 20 years older, as I noticed his hair was already almost white and he seemed so bowed and stricken beyond his years.

For a few moments we sat there, I observing the man closely, and he looking off into the distance as if trying to recall his thoughts. Then the man began. "I was born in farther Pommerania on the 11th day of the month Hesvan, in the year of the world 5618, known among the Christians as Nov. 11th, 1857. My parents were Hebrews. I was circumcised a Hebrew, but, after my earlier years, I rarely, if ever, entered a Jewish synagogue, though I received a classical education at the University of Kolberg and became most thoroughly learned in the writings of the older Hebrews, and, while others used the Targumim as commentaries and interpretations, I read the Talmud and the Torah in the olden writ; but, still, I was a rather loose believer in religions of any kind and even today, after the dreadful scenes through which I have passed, I scarcely know what to believe, or what course to take. I am literally a Jew gone mad.

Well, after I reached the years of manhood, the persecutions, to which the Jewish people were subjected, drove me from my native land; and, my parents being long since dead, I came to America, and, in the various cities of the country, the name of Joseph bar Elim was known as one of the most prosperous of the Jewish Nation. Less than two years ago I retired from active business, and, investing my money in safe enterprises, I looked about me for a few years of enjoyment. Up to this time I had remained unmarried and had never fallen in love but once, and the object of that early affection has long since been sleeping in a Hebrew grave in sight of the Baltic Sea, in far-off Pommerania. I had taken a great interest in archaeological studies and had made a specialty of the sub-division which treated of prehistoric races in America. I read all the works extant on the subject of the peopling of America

by the ten lost tribes of Isreal and at one time, in the city of Philadelphia, I read a paper before the American Association for the Advancement of Science on that subject, which, at the time, excited much comment from the learned of both continents.

So, finding my time at my command, I journeyed into Colorado with the purpose in view of examining into the works of the cliff-dwellers whose nest like habitations are found in the cliffs above the San Juan, the Gunnison and Colorado Rivers. I journeyed entirely alone and carried with me only such baggage and cooking utensils as I was obliged to have, and, in the main, those months spent in such rambling hunts, were the happiest, as they were certainly the last periods of enjoyment I was ever to know.

One day in the month of December, 1890, I observed what seemed to me a nest-like habitation of the cliff dwellers, at least 2000 feet above the river bed of the Grand Canyon of the Gunnison. It was a sheer ascent. The steps in the rocks were moss-grown and slippery and it seemed almost like courting death for anything human to try to scale that upright wall. Surely, thought I, if they of old who dwelt therein could climb those slippery heights why might not I? So, divesting myself of all superfluous clothing and leaving my rifle and baggage on the rocky shelf below, I made the attempt.

As I slowly crept up that almost perpendicular wall I wondered how it were ever possible for women with babes clinging to their necks to climb those sheer and upright cliffs, clinging to the niches cut in the mountain side like spiders on the wall of a cavern. Far below me I could hear the hollow boom and roar of the river in the canyon's depth, though I dared not look down those precipitous wails. Once a great bird swept fiercely by, so near that its wings fanned my face, and I almost loosened my hold in the slippery niche of the rock; then a fear came upon me; my head reeled and a cold sweat covered my brow, one moment thus I swayed; then

my courage returned, and higher and still higher I climbed, and then the thought flashed over my mind, great God how shall I ever descend! but I looked above, and seeing I was nearly to the top, toiled on. And now I grasped a stunted tree on the shelf above and drew myself up onto the rock and rising, I looked around.

I was evidently in a habitation of one of the cliff dwellers, and certainly one of the highest ever yet found; but there was no present indication of recent occupancy. I noticed an opening at the side of the cave which led off into the mountain, and proceeded in that direction, when before me a wild man leaped out with upraised hands as if about to strike. My heart almost died within me, for the man's appearance was unearthly and awful. Over his shoulders was thrown a skin of some wild animal and about his waist was a leathern girdle, otherwise he was entirely naked, and as he stood there with his long hair and beard loosened to the winds, in an attitude ready to strike, he seemed awful as the rack of storm—even as my heart sank down expecting to die, I thought how grand and majestic he seemed as he towered up like a god!

Then slowly the old man lowered his arms and spoke, and his voice seemed ghostly shrill—spoke in the olden Hebrew: "Had it not been for the talisman you wear I had slain you," and he pointed to my Masonic charm which I wore on my chain, for I was then a member of the Commandery.

"Who are you?" I asked with bated breath.

"Yes who am I? Who am I?" said the old man, still speaking in the language in which the Talmud and Torah are writ, and then he continued:

"I am Zerib bar Elia, known among men as Elijah the Tishbite.

And then he asked, "Who are you and why journey you here?"

I told him my name was Joseph bar Elim and that I had journeyed hither in search of information concerning the older peoples.

"Come with me," said the old man, "your countenance seems open and frank, but I warn you by that token you bear on your Talisman sign of the cross-tree of Moses on which the serpent of Aaron was wound, and the sign than T placed on the forehead of the faithful, remember your vow, or you surely perish." Then the old man lighted a brazier which he took from a shelf in the wall and led on into an inner chamber.

I saw the priests of Levi climb
And blow their trumpets from the height,
When each new moon its crescent hung
A silver sickle 'gainst the night,
Swung low o'er doomed Askelon.

The same bright constellations burn
Around yon Zodiac's flashing rays,
As when into the dungeon's gloom
The Pleiades shown in olden days
Beneath tall-towered Babylon.

Balbec and Nineveh are gone
Beneath the touch with death hath laid,
But yon bright harvest moon tonight
Is that same moon which Joshua stayed
A hand-breadth over Ajalon.

CHAPTER II.

ELIJAH THE TISHBITE.

We seated ourselves at a little distance apart in an inner chamber with the burning brazier between us, and for a few moments neither of us spoke. I looked at the old man closely: was he a madman or was he indeed a Hebrew of the olden time? He was dark; darker than the inhabitants of old Spain, and he looked as he sat there in that rocky place as the Prophets of Israel are pictured on the rocks of Nineveh and the sun-dried brick of Egypt.

Then the old man rose and taking down a mighty book of parchment he placed it open upon his knees and lifted his voice and cried "Javeh, Javeh, how long! how long!" I had never seen anything like it on earth; those wonderful, blazing, prophetic eyes; that awful sorrow of tone, wrung from a heart which told of an age-long want. Then, with a tremor at my heart like that of him who confronts the dead I said, and my voice seemed unearthly shrill: "What are you?"

He turned upon me those wonderful eyes, in which the lights played in and out of their dismal depths like fires from the nether world, and spake in slow but awful tones:

"Yes, what am I?"

And then I heard the clash and clamor of far-off cymbals, the the roar of the onset and the battle cry. In the cavern depths I heard ten thousand warring sounds ever growing nearer and nearer, till, like two mighty walls of sea, they rushed together

and sound met sound and silence fell in that ghost-haunted place.

I felt I was come to die, or was even then dead and had come to judgment; but below I still could hear the ceaseless lapsing of the river's wave, and it felt that it still was earth.

Slowly from out his beard the old man lifted his face and spoke.

"You are come a long way," he said still speaking in the Hebrew tongue.

"Yes, Father," I replied, "but pray tell me, if you are indeed Elijah the Tishbite, how have you lived, if indeed you still live, through all these countless years—tell me I pray you, for you are surely the most wonderful man I have ever seen?"

Slowly he spoke, with a look on his face as if trying to recall the memories of by-gone years: "Truly I am Zerib bar Elia, known among men as Elijah the Tishbite. I was a herdsman on the hills by the sea of Gallilee. I gathered the sycamore fruit and wrested the bleating lamb from the jaws of the devouring lion on my native hills. One day I felt the breath of prophecy stir within me and a voice in my ear said, "Go down unto Samaria and say unto the king, even unto Ahab the son of Omri, As the Lord God of Israel liveth before whom I stand, because of thine iniquities, there shall be neither dew nor rain for three years."

In the books of the Rabbinical authors it is writ how at Mount Carmel I vanquished the priests of Baal and brake them at the brook Kishon. The Lord of Hosts had raised me up as a scourge unto the curse of idolatry and the hated worship of Ashtaroth and Baal.

"In the books of the prophets it is further written how I, Elijah the Tishbite was caught up into a fiery cloud, but know you, Joseph bar Elim, when the temples of Baal and Ashtaroth are forever silent in the land of Israel, my mission is done and I shall pass hence." (Days afterward these words came ringing in my

ears like a mighty trumpet.)

Then the prophet continued, "As in the wilderness, the ravens have brought me food and my garments, such as they are, have never waxed old. So I still live; and the prophecy I made has come to pass, for in the appointed days the Assyrians came down with their cohorts and knocked at the gates of Samaria and they fell, never to rise, and the word of the Lord of Hosts was fulfilled, in that captivity was led captive, and ever afterward men have been wont to speak of our people as the ten lost tribes of Israel. But know you, my son, that nothing ever dies, on which the Lord of Hosts has blown his breath of divine benediction, though the ways may be long ere the working out of its divine fulfillment."

The old man paused and still I looked silently on. This indeed, then, was Elijah the Tishbite, prophet in the days of Ahab and Jezebel. Those eyes had looked on the splendors of Samaria. Those lips had moved in prophecy, ere the marble horses had stamped in the friezes of the Parthenon and while yet the army of Sennacherib had not encamped against Jerusalem.

And then I said, "Father tell me how it is you still live?"

"My son, it is written in the Torah how Moses looked upon the burning bush, which burned, but was consumed not; so the Lord of Hosts has lengthened my days in the land that his word may appear true when he spoke through the lips of Amos, his servant, that day at the feast in Bethel, "Us only does the Lord know."

"How is it," I asked, "that here in these mountain solitudes I find you so far away from your herds in the wilderness by Gallilee — speak I pray you, for my heart yearns to know of all this wonderful thing?"

Again the old man spake, "My son it is written in the Talmud of the tribe of Judah and the tribe of Benjamin and the half tribe of Manasseh, which dwelt at Jerusalem, that the ten tribes of Israel which were led into captivity at Nineveh perished utter-

ly in the land. It is not so. The pillar of fire by night, the cloud by day, as in the days of Moses, led them out of the land of their captivity, far Northward and Eastward, beyond the ends of the world, past the dwelling places of the Hyperboreans, across Asia, across the ice-bound channel which divides Asia from the land of Altantis and thence southward till they reached this land of mountains; and here in the valley of the second Jehosaphat they still live; still awaiting the coming of the promised Messiah and the building of the New Jerusalem. And, my son, the day of His coming is near at hand. Last night as I watched the skies lo a new star trembled in the constellation Cassiopeia, near the star called Caph, and new stars appear only when Princes of the house of Israel are born."

And then I asked to be shown this wonderful land he mentioned, and those who dwelt therein.

Slowly the old man replaced the mighty book of old-world parchment into its hidden nook in the wall, and bid me follow.

Deus Vocat.

When rocking worlds shall quit their starry course,
Swung in libration, mighty, strange and true;
(The dead are sleeping there!)

When swaying stars are stilled with one low "hush!",
One breath of Him who loosed their fiery force;
(God's own are ever fair!)

When all the circling orbs where vision tires
Along the four-went ways sidereal spanned,
(The dead are waking there!)

In one wild conflagration's burning shroud
Shall light the darkened void with funeral fires,
In yon bright home above
God's own are singing there!

CHAPTER III.

IN THE TOMB OF THE PROPHETS.

Carrying the burning brazier the old man led the way through lofty arches cut in the solid stone, through mighty gates made strong with brazen hinges. On either side passages led away into the depths of the mountains.

"This, my son," said the old man, pausing before a mighty door "leads into the burial place of the Prophets and the kings of Israel—woudst enter?"

I bowed.

Then touching a hidden spring the massive door swung back and we found ourselves in a rock-hewn hall of vast height. On either side as high as one could reach, in niches or platforms of the rock, were the dead of Israel.

"Here," said the Prophet, "is the dust of Abraham and beside him sleeps silent the ashes of Sarah. In this sarcophagus is Isaac and there lies Rebekah. Here in its changeless rest is the mummy of Jacob who died and was enbalmed in the land of Egypt; beside him is Rachel—and, lo on her shroud the painted teraphim she took from her father—Here is the mummy of Joseph—embalmed in the fashion of Egypt, with the painted pictures of Khem on his breast. And here sleeps Ada, the daughter of Jephthah, in her long and changeless rest which no fond Hebrew boy shall ever break with words of love. 'Twas so she looked on that summer day when the hosts of Jephthah returned from war with the Ammonites. For such a lovely dead do you wonder at the yearly fast and the mourning of Hebrew maidens? For her country she died just as the passion of love had awoke in her soul.

"And this is the dust of King David: lo the shepherds crook on

his breast and the coronet of the Israelitish kings on his brow.

"And here rests the clay of her, Bath Sheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite, whose beauty stole away the heart of him who sleeps in yonder silent cell, above whose breast lies the shepherd's crook — See how wonderous fair. Well has the embalmer done his work; 'Twas so she looked that day when David the King for love of her placed Uriah the Hittite in the front of the battle, that so he might find death.

"Here is the Sarcophagus of Esther, stolen as we left the Assyrian land that the good and great of Israel might all sleep together in this far off place. Lo, on her shroud her Hebrew name, Hadassah, which meaneth Myrtle, emblem of justice, used in the Feast of Tabernacles from the day when Judiath and Benjamin returned from captivity at Babylon."

He lifted the burial cloth from her brow and spoke: "So looked she on that day when in the palace at Shushan before Artaxerxes, she, the loveliest of the maidens in the Empire, found grace with the king; or again on that other day when Mordecai sat at the gates and his gallows was o'building!

"Lo the ages have left no mark of change upon that changeless brow since Artaxerxes saw her laid away and placed his kingly seal on the door of her tomb!

"And here is the mummy of the great King Solomon. See where old Nathan had cut on his shroud the initials of the Queen of Sheba, that the priesthood of God might see and ponder and be wise. Alas that day when the idolatrous Queen set foot in Jerusalem, the axe of him that hewed in the forests of Lebanon left its handle and slew the man who worked by his side. Oh that the marble limbs of that wicked Queen had been straightened in her tomb ere her fatal beauty had turned the great kings heart from the worship of the true God!

"And here she sleeps, Balkis, the Queen of Sheba, taken from her tomb where Solomon laid her in Tadmor, the city in the desert —Look not long, lest the painted pillars of Baal on her shroud should burn you with the fires of Maloch. 'Twas she who set up the altars of Baal and instituted the worship of Ashtaroth. Oh that her fair features had been torn by wild dogs like the hated Jezebel ere she stepped foot on the hills of Jerusalem! Let us pass."

I looked at the old man's features and they seemed to me awful as vivid lightnings, and then he continued:

"And there they lie, the prophets, the priests and patriarchs, borne across these weary miles till the foot of the wanderer stayed and his journey ended. In the days of Pharoah, king of the Nile-land was the art of embalming taught to Israel in Exile while they fashioned the bricks without straw and reared the monuments of Egypt.

"In the last chapter of the first book of the Pentateuh you will find it written, how the bodies of Jacob and Joseph were enbalmed and borne out of the land of Khem and laid at rest in their tomb at Machpelah. In the books of the Rabbinical authors you will find it written that the tombs of the twelve kings who dwelt at Jerusalem are lost and cannot be found. It is even so. From the tomb of Macpelah and the burial places at Jerusalem and Samaria their bodies were carried away and borne across these lonesome leagues of land till at last they were laid in these rock-hewn caverns where the hand of the destroyer may never come, where the seal of their sleep may remain unbroken. Gold, glory, the grave and God are the four winds which waft the Hebrew's sail whether he dwell in the valley of Shinar or pitch his tent in the sands of Sahara."

The old man paused. I looked once more into those deep and wonderful eyes. It seemed that I could see therein, now the glory

which shone on his face when his chariot of fire whirled burning nave on the mounting winds, and again I saw what seemed to be lurid lights from the pit of Tophet!

"Come," said the old man, "let us proceed."

But before I left that chamber of the dead, once more I approached the sarcophagus which housed the dead Ada, daughter of Jephthah, and lifted the cloth from her marble brow and looked once more on her silent features. She was young. Not more than eighteen summers of age and the bud of her womanhood had scarcely opened in bloom when the priest for the sacrifice came. There on her snowy neck was the cruel kiss of the knife coming ere her virgin heart had beat with the passion of perfect love. The ages had left no trace of decay, untouched by corruption she slept, as lovely as when of old she counted the petals which rounded the rose and dreamed of some Hebrew love. And then I thought how wonderfully fair and how like to the face I had loved of old, the face of my long lost Rachel! And then the old man led on and I was forced to follow.

When we reached the gallery without, the old man paused and said: "Joseph bar Elim there is that in thy face which shows no ordinary man—wouldst see the ark of the covenant?"

I once more bowed a reply for my heart was too full for words. The old man paused before a door of lofty hight and spoke some word in another tongue—I had one time heard something like it from the Book of Jasher—when lo an inner sanctuary opened and before me stood the ark with the kneeling cherubim.

"None may enter and live," said the seer, "except they speak the name Incommunicable."

I gazed in astonishment, and the old man observing, guessed my thoughts and continued:

"My son, it is written in the books of the Rabbinical authors in the Midrash and the Targumim that at the siege of Jerusalem

when Nebuchadnezzar overthrew the house of Judah and carried them captive to Babylon, that the ark of the covenant perished. It is not so. Ere the hands of the soldiery had broken its gates, unseen spirits bore the ark of the covenant out of the Tabernacle and the temple of Jehovah and across the rivers and hills to the land of Assyria where the children of Israel were yet in captivity; and when they rose up to flee to this far off land, unseen spirits bore it viewless before the marching tribes and hid it here in the caves of the Troglodytes till the coming of Christ to claim his own, when once more it shall stand before the altar of the New Jerusalem. And, son, the days are not long; if these old eyes have not lost the spirit of prophecy since the days when they saw the cloud like an open hand covering the rainless fields of Judea. Pass on. No eyes but mine and thine have seen its shaken curtains lo these countless years. Remember the token."

I gave the token, the while my heart was thinking, not of the glory of the ark of the covenant, not of the wonderful things I had witnessed, but the beauty of the upturned face of the perished Ada, daughter of Jephthah, the warrior Gileadite, lying there in its unkissed loveliness, through all these whirling years of time.

Could it be a dream, or was I indeed in the tombs of the departed Israelites, and was I Joseph the son of Elim, born in the month Hesvan, 5618 of the world, or was I a spirit of the olden days. These quiet upturned faces of the dead, were they not those of the people who tended the stalls and kept the shops in the quiet town where I was born? They seemed the same. No look of remorse was on the face of the warrior Jephthah, no sadness in the eyes of the dead Ada; they slept as though they knew that whether they lived or died it was all for the glory of Him, they but the silent stops in the breath of time!

"Father," I said, "have then no feet but yours and mine ever traversed these halls?"

"Yes, my son, others have come and gone but only with the dust of princes in their hands, bearing them silently in, then passing silently out, but no foot has ever approached the chamber where rests the ark of the covenant, and no breath has ever rattled in the ears of the dead but mine, thine, and one other—Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew."

When I heard him mention the Wandering Jew, my astonishment knew no bounds. Then like echoes afar off, I remembered hearing my mother sing to me in the German tongue, in our home in farther Pommerania, songs of the "Ewige Jude!" but I had always heard that the Prophet Elijah himself was the person called the Wandering Jew, if indeed there were such a being, so I asked, "Who is the Wandering Jew and where is he, and when was he last here?"

Then said the Prophet, "The signs of the zodiac have fallen back a hand-breadth in the heavens since last his feet mounted that stony stair. It was in the month Nisan more than three hundred years ago he last was here."

The old man took a goblet of water, shook it and gazing steadily into it said, "Joseph bar Elim ere the moon waneth the feet of Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew will be here, for lo he hasteneth from afar as one who beareth a message. And know you, my son, the Wandering Jew is the maker of sandals who wrought in Jerusalem in the days when Jesus the Christ was crucified. It so chanced that as the Saviour was bearing his cross to the hill of Golgotha he wearied and sought to rest in the door of Ahasuerus who would not suffer him, and who struck him and said "go faster Jesus," and the Christ, whom I, Elijah had prophesyed, turned and said unto him, "Yes I will go faster, but thou shalt abide till I come again." This I have heard from the man himself. And afterwards, though he turned and believed, yet when he is grown to a century old, his years fall away from him and once more he

takes up the weary thread of life and begins again his ceaseless wanderings over the world; now seen in the cities by the Eastern sea; now in the far-off islands of mid-ocean; again in the crowded thoroughfares of mighty places his feet are found, resting never till the second coming of the crucified Christ, to judge the quick and the dead, known to men everywhere and in all times as the Wandering Jew."

And then I spake: "But father, among men thou, Elijah the Tishbite, art often spoken of as the Wandering Jew."

"Well, I know," said the old man "that many so believe; but in the second year of the reign of Hezekiah, the king, is it not written in the sacred book of the prophets, how I Elijah the Tishbite, was caught away into the heavens before the wondering eyes of Elisha, prophet of God. Truly it is written in the books of the Rabbinical authors, that I shall not taste of death, till the altars of Baal are silent and the fires are dead on the pillars of Ashtaroth and then my mission is ended, and I shall pass hence to my place. So here in this mountain fastness I live, guarding the sacred dust of the Prophets, writing the history of Israel as God discloses it and waiting the coming of the day of glory, a living example of the burning bush, which appeared unto Moses on Horeb, ever burning but consumed not, blessed be the name of Him, Elohim, name Incommunicable!

And now, my son, I hear the cry of the ravens beating the air with restless wings bearing the food to me, as in the days of old when I fled to the mountain for safety. Come, partake of my evening repast. Have I not often divided it with the famishing stock dove which builded her nest in the mouth of the cave?"

After we had eaten in silence, the old man arose, showed me to an inner chamber and leaving a burning brazier by my side, and kissing my brow said, "Rest, my son, till the morrow for you have much to see and learn."

The Night Wind.

The same old wind that blew o'er Egypt. Yea
It cooled the workman's brow as bending low
He hewed on mighty Memnon; or that day
The builder leaned against the pylon towers
Of those gray pyramids and called to them
Who climbed its weary heights with brick and stone.

It laid the white Sahara's dust above
The fallen obelisk and sculptured stone;
It kissed the brow of Isis on whose face
No mortal eye dare look. It saw the death
Of him who at Abouthis sleeps. Perchance
Ere Pharaoh lived or Menes was, it fanned
The sculptured brow of those who silent keep
Their ceaseless watch in many a carven cell.

It touched the Hebrew's forehead as he toiled
The slave mark on his limbs, and gazing forth
His brown face lit with something more than hope
As there before him lay sweet freedom's land
Beyond the blue of faint Arabian hills.

It saw the Egyptian host go down in death
While Miriam's flying fingers smote the strings
And her dark Hebrew maidens danced along.
To me the night wind's breath seems as a friend
Returned from long gone days. It lays its hand
Upon my fevered pulse and says "Be still."
I touch the fringe of night, as they of old
Did touch Christ's robe and lo my wounds are healed!
To me the night wind hurrying on as pressed
By foe behind, has many a glad refrain;
Lo I will wait and listen yet awhile
Until my soul shall catch the mighty strain.

CHAPTER IV.

A DREAM.

That night I had a dream whereof the meaning at the time was to me unknown.

I thought I was lifted on the wings of Time and borne backward along the years of the dateless past before time was. I saw God going forth from Nowhere unto Nowhere and as He came and went He gathered Nothing. Long time He came and went and gathered until at last within His hands lo Something! and this He sowed and thence sprang Chaos, and o'er it brooded darkness dense and still. Only the light of God's face shone through star dust uncreate.

Then God reached down and with His finger tip circled the rounded universe of worlds and with His breath blew on them and they ran—swift eddying on and sang their morning songs together and in the light of His effulgence shone, still shine. And then storms brooded. Fire and wave leaped up, entwined fire-swift and wave-strong arm and battled for dominion. Then o'er their conflict that bright One looked down and called the storm wave back to deep sea hollows and chained the fierce fires neath the Earth's dead rim.

Then life grew up. Sea forms lay on the shore, or bellowed loud in reed-lined bay. Time passed. Ages and eons ran down

and wearied and another Life sprang up above their outworn dust, until one summer morn an angel passed his wing across a lone star called the world then vanished, and lo God stood before the gate of Eden and fashioned man and woman bright and fair!

The scene was shifted. Flowers bloomed, birds sang, trees bent their palm-crowned heads in prayer and that first man and woman, hand in hand, walked through the bowers of Eden and sweetly sang. And then I saw two forms bowed down and bent creep through a wide-flung gate and saw it close and a fierce seraph with swift flaming sword stand guard thereat, and those two outcast fallen Things went hence to die.

Again I saw within the gate, and lo a tree whose roots pierced down to Hell and wound around poor fallen man as though to lift him up from Sheol's gulf and on its sun-kissed crown lo golden fruit!

And then I saw heart hunger and remorse; saw brother lift fell murderous hand against his very brother and saw the curse set on his hateful brow. Time passed and once more darkness brooded on the deep and lo on shoreless sea a lone craft tempest-tossed and round it naught but night and sea in the heavens one star alone shone out.

Again I looked and lo an old man stood before his tent on wide-roomed plain, and once more that same star shook o'er the hill. The cattle lowed and in the fold the sheep called lovingly to its fond weanling and all was peace. And there beside the old man stood a seraph bright and pointed to the stars, whose countless orbs thick patined the blue dome of night, and then the angel spake "Look now toward Heaven and tell the stars if thou canst number them, so shall thy seed be."

And then another picture passed: Men bowed and women bent

beneath sun-hardened brick and stone dragged up steep heights of Memphis and Egyptian Thebes. And then long wails and sobs of countless throngs with dead babes in their hands; and then songs of a passing people and cries from pursuing hordes—a sea-wall broken and a perished host while rang the sound of timbrels and mad song all up and down the echoing Red Sea's shore.

And then scene followed scene—white wastes of sand, fierce black-bearded Bedouin; lone Nebo's height and that strange burial; waters which stood back while a throng, dry-shod passed o'er, and once more shook that star above the far-off hills.

And then I saw lush grapes from Eschol's heights, walls totter and fall down and heard the blast of war's fierce trumpets blown. And then wild cries and fierce unrest and pillaged temples and proud cities sacked, laid desolate, till even the bat and owl housed in their temple walls.

At last once more that self-same star shook o'er the Bethlehem heights and peace once more sat on Judea's hills. And then Golgotha and the crucified Christ! Then once more hunger and heart break and, driven on, Rachel lamenting her children in far lands—the hand of every man against them and for 1900 years a by-word and a name in each ones mouth—foot sore and weary but can not find rest until the King comes in His glory to lead His Israel up.

Then once more that same star shook in the vault of Heaven and then the end and judgment.

Once more I thought God stood among the stars, blew on them and their fires went out, and Chaos once more reigned.

And then I thought I stood at compt and when my doom was read, my sin, unnamable, but ere I passed to Sheol I crossed o'er where a white robed woman stood with golden hair, on whose bright forehead gleamed a star, and kissed her on the lips, clung to her side

and then a multitude bowed down and sang before the throne lifting their hands to Him for me:

"Two hearts that have loved in the valley below
May never be parted, be merciful Lord,
Love is the best blessing thou hast to bestow,
Be merciful, merciful, merciful, Lord."

And then I awoke and shook the memories of the dream from me.

Older and older it grows
The truth of the wonderful story
That love to a woman is sweet
Though mingled with tears of her sorrow.

CHAPTER V.

IN THE LAND OF LOST ISRAEL.

The morning sun was tipping the peaks of the Cordilleras with a glowing light when I arose and came forth. The gray haired Prophet was risen before me. I heard him praying on the outer wall and could hear him clapping his hands as if invoking a manifestation of divine power. I joined him and, when his prayers were ended, I heard the flapping of hurried wings and a flight of ravens alighted at his feet each bearing a morsel of food, and then calling aloud to each other they soared away and were gone.

"Thus," said the old man, "have I been fed these passing years; others have grown old and died, but age has halted and come not near me, though dust and decay have mouldered on the towers of Jerusalem and foxes have made their dens in its walls. Allah akbar, God is great!"

"And now, my son," said the old seer, when our morning repast was ended, "the world is before you. Come with me."

Then he led me through many a long and winding hallway on whose walls were sculptured the picture of the Sun and figures of monster and beast and man—all carved in stony relief by men of a long gone day. At last we reached what seemed to be the farther side of the mountain and came to an opening through which we could once more see the light of day.

"There," said the old man, pointing to the valley which lay at

our feet, "are the children of Israel, they whom the world commonly call the ten lost tribes. If you desire to go down and learn of their ways pass on—farther I may not go."

"Tell me," I said, "will harm befall me?"

"Son, of that it is written thou mayst not know—truly the power of foretelling the future rests with those who possess the arcana of God. This is sufficient,—thou shalt live and learn. When weary, return to Zerib bar Elia, till then farewell—Remember the token."

He gave me the Masonic signal of secrecy, kissed me on the forehead then, taking up his burning brazier, turned and disappeared leaving me standing alone.

Below me extended beyond my farthest vision a valley watered by a river which came from under the mountains and, as I afterward learned, disappeared beneath a mountain on the other side. Cities and villages here and there dotted the river's banks, such a picture, no doubt, as fell on the sight of Moses as he stood on the brow of Nebo and gazed across into the Promised land. There was a second Ai, with its widened gates, beyond Jericho, with its towering walls; all sleeping quietly on that winter day, there in an unknown valley of Colorado, and mine the only feet which ever journeyed here from the great world lying about, witless of all this wonder in its midst. The vulture sitting aloft on a desolate crag had seen it all, but beyond this hill locked valley no eye had ever gazed; over those lofty mountains no foot had ever climbed; before and behind an earthquake's throb had reared a wall shutting them in forever!

Long I looked and pondered. Behind me lay the winding passage through the catacombs of the dead; before me this newly discovered world with its shining tower and glancing river, while far away were the restless feet of the Wandering Jew journeying

hither with hastening step—(Ah why?)—behind me in the silent hills I thought of the lovely features of the dead Ada, the daughter of Jephthah, so like the face of my lost Rachel on the day we laid her away in her Hebrew grave! Below me in the valley, I heard the mournful note of the stock dove calling to her mate and far above me an eagle soared on tireless wing, and over it all the blue of the sky outstretched like the hollow of God's great hand! And then my soul grew strong and I passsed down and cast no look behind.

I paused at a well from which water was lifted with a sweep. Here men of a dark brow were leading their camels to drink, and many a Rebekah was filling her pitcher with water, comely as of old and most sweetly chare. As I approached, men and maidens greeted me with a salaam. One of the maidens—had I not seen her before in the Jew's quarters in my native city?—brought water and bid me drink. I greeted them and passed on, while all looked at me with wondering eyes because of my strange apparel.

I came to where workmen were hewing timbers for a temple. I gave one of them a Masonic signal; he answered it, and leaving his chisel where it lay, passed on with me, meanwhile, conversing in the older Hebrew in which the Talmud and the Book of Jasher are writ.

I asked him to show me the temple of Christ.

Slowly the man repeated, as if trying to think, "Christ, Christ: there is no temple of Christ; Christ is not yet come. But yonder," said the man, "is the temple of Baal: there beside it the temple of Ashtaroth and here is the temple of Jehovah, the true and living God. But brother," said he, pointing toward my Masonic charm, "I warn you by the token of the cross you wear on that talisman on your breast, symbolic of the cross tree of Moses and the sign Thau T placed on the forehead of the faithful, go not near the temples of Baal nor Ashtaroth when the cry

comes up from their altar lest ye perish." And then the man returned to his work.

I passed on, still journeying down the valley. At noon I stopped by the wayside and approaching an open door I said, "Peace be unto you."

An aged woman arose and said: "In the name of God I bid you enter."

I saw she was blind. A young maiden, whom the woman called Martha, brought me a stool, then fetched water in a basin from a spring near by, and asking me to lay aside my shoes, she washed and dried my feet, then hastened and brought water with which to bathe my hands and face. She was not above 16 years of age and anywhere in the world would have been called beautiful. Through the dark tints of her Hebrew skin could be seen the rich red blood racing on in her pulsing veins. Was it excitement, or fear, or what else, which caused her to blush, when as she finished her work, her eyes met mine and she said: "Stranger, rest till evening, you have come a long way and are weary, gladly will I bring you food for my heart is gladdened at thy look?"

These simple words fell upon my ears lightly at the time but days afterward they came to me again, ringing in my ears like the music of a far-off bell, sweeter than any other sound on earth."

Then I answered and said: "I will stay."

That evening when the moon had wheeled her silver chariot across the sky and was pouring her mellow beams down into the valley and we sat by the door way, I asked the woman to tell me the story of her life.

She turned her sightless eyes as though looking up at the stars, while the maiden Martha sat at my feet weaving some woolen threads into a garment, then said: "My husband died at the crossing of Bethpeor battling for the temple of the true God. My

only son, because of his comeliness, was sacrificed on the altar of Baal, and ere the season fled these eyes ran dry as a summer brook. So Martha, my only child, and myself are left alone in this widowed home, waiting the call of Jehovah, knowing that He that beholds the fall of the sparrow and hears the cry of the raven will keep us, for is He not here and everywhere even as the Psalmist sang:

"Whither shall I go from thy spirit,
Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?
If I make my bed in Hell behold thou art there!
If I take the wings of the morning and dwell
In the uttermost parts of the sea, even
There shall thy hand lead me and thy
Right hand shall hold me."

And then I looked into her upturned sightless eyes and it seemed to me there rested a glory therein such as the painters of old pictured above the Madonna or Michael Angelo drew around the brow of his angels. Then the picture vanished, and the remembrance returned and a voice, as it were, sounded like a trumpet in my ears, "Where are the lions of Judah?"

And then I felt the blood sweep up in my veins and beat at the gates of my temples and the weapons upon my thigh rocked in their leathern shield. Oh had I only been there with the deadly weapon I bore by my side to have sent a hissing lead through the heart of those priests of the temple of Baal as they laid hateful hands on her innocent child! Here, even here, I thought, the same old role is played. Death at the ford and death at the font. Here in this lonely nook of the world, in the name of Baal some died, while far away soldiery rode each other down and sweet innocents were done to death inthe name of Christ!—ah when would it all end? Was it a reality or was it all but the stuff dreams are made of? Over there beyond those towering hills which shut us in, was there then a great world going by, some to the cradle and some to the tomb, while here as of old the strife went on, alike

beneath the curtaining cloud of an Eastern clime or the rainless blue which wraps the Cordilleras! Ah when would it all end? And then I thought of the hastening feet of the Wandering Jew and the star which Zerib bar Elia said was trembling above, and I spoke aloud:

"Yes, when will it all end?"

"Soon, very soon, my son," said the old lady. "Have you not heard that the coming of the Messiah is near at hand? All night long messengers came and went from the temple of Baal and the shrine of the hateful Ashtaroth and the wail of the sooth-sayers could be heard on the hills crying aloud, "Baal, Great Baal help us!" Surely the Prophets mistook not the signs and even now a new star trembles above in the eastern sky, seen even at mid-day by those who have eyes."

I looked above the distant hills and saw the constellations rise. There was Pegasus, the winged-horse; there was the maiden Andromeda, chained to a rock, and below her the sea whales gaping mouth! There was Cepheus, crowned and in his hand the scepter of rule and above him trembled in the purple night the glowing light of another world, in the constellation Cassiopeia, the selfsame star which of old stood over the heights of Bethlehem when Christ in the manger lay! Ah could it be then that all this Time Vesture should be swept away; that up from the ends of the world the blind, and lame, and halt should come; the dead should arise from their graves; even the mummies of the Kings of Judea asleep these ages long should come from their silent places and cast their wrappings away and stand at the judgement; and I so near it all, so near that dreadful day—ah, how would it all end?

And then in my ears there rang the "Dies Irae" chanted in the little Catholic church near my home in farther Pommerania in the

years long gone:

"Dies Irae, dies illa
Solvet saeclum in favilla
Judex ergo cum sedebit
Quidquit latet, apparebit,
Nil inultum remanebit."

It seemed to me while I sat thus silent and thoughtful I could see the maiden Martha drawing nearer to my feet, and I thought how beautiful she seemed—too beautiful to die ere her soul had tasted of the bliss of love. How fair she looked as she sat there weaving the web and the woof together as the threads of our lives are woven in the loom of the years. 'Twas so looked the divine Sarah in the olden days when the slave looked up as she passed and his heart was gladdened at her queenly tread. Tall as the Jewish writers have ever loved to picture Sarah; comely as Rebekah on the day she stood at the well; and as lovely as Rachel; fashioned it seemed to me in the pristine beauty of Eve on that morning in the East of Eden when Adam awoke from his sleep and the first and loveliest of women stood by him.

Beauty does not change; the type is eternal. So Martha looked as the Hebrew maidens have ever looked since the day when the angels stood in the shadow of the tent on the plains of Mamre and saw the comely Sarah at her wifely work! And then they asked me to tell them the story of my life.

I told them as plainly as I could, but to them it was all as a dream. Traditions indeed had preserved among this people the story of another and outer world, but over these mountain barriers no foot had ever passed, and how could they but wonder whether Earth had not died in that earthquake shock which locked the hills about them in never loosening embrace?

So the evening wore on, and an other day and still I lingered.

No sounds had ever seemed so sweet to me as Martha's voice since the years long gone when my early love was wont to sing to me under the blossoming trees! But then it was not love. It was something akin to that sense of happiness a mariner feels when in a distant port he hears the songs of his Fatherland and there awakes in his heart the memories of Home, Sweet Home!

'Tis said that kindness unlocks the door and friendship is the first step in the stairway of love: but there is a love which pauses not at the rounds of the ladder, but mounts through the window of the heart to kneel at the shrine of Love. It cannot be weighed in a balance, for it outweighs the hills of the world. Plummet cannot fathom its depths, nor miles compass its bounds. The logic of wisdom cannot give a reason. Love, the first, best gift of God to man! And yet my heart was above there in the coffin with the dead Ada, the holiest sacrifice ever laid on the altar of Israel.

I assisted in the work of the fields and did many a little errand to and fro, meanwhile learing much of the valley and the people who dwelt therein. In the bazaars of trade and in the little stalls there were the same covetous eyes I had ever known, and, Jew that I was, I felt the old desire for riches rise up within me. Gold, the only Talisman which unlocks the door of a Gentile unto the hated Jew, so thought I, in the world beyond, and justified myself and people in their greed for gain: but here, even here where all were Jews the same old play was enacted; and once again I justified my people by saying: "Thou shalt not require usury at the hands of thy brother, but of a stranger thou canst," and to a Jew behind his counter all are strangers.

I visited the temple of Baal and Ashtaroth, holding my weapons ready for instant use, as the black browed priests scowled at me as I passed and whispered to each other in an undertone. I thought I had never seen such forbidding faces. Out of their crisp

black beards their small eyes shone with a savage light, and how could they shine otherwise? On the morning when I first visited the temple of Ashtaroth the limbs of a young girl of perhaps 15 summers were lying on the altar and in their midst was a smoking heart! I turned from the place, sick at my very soul, and strode out into the morning air. On the highways lepers would cry: "Unclean! unclean! Come not near;" here under a sky where no such sickness was thought ever to come and so, after I had seen enough, I returned to the house of the widow, bade them good-bye and promising soon to return I set my feet once more toward the cave of the Prophets, for was the Wandering Jew not coming and was the memory of the dead Ada not yet in my heart?

Night Of Other Days.

Tall queenly Night! Day's radiant bride of old,
Bright dancer in thy jewelled tent of blue!
Immortal in thy glories old, yet new,
And beautiful in robes of studded gold!
Upon yon night of wonders manifold
Old Homer turned his blind and stricken eyes
And thought of rocky Chios, thought of skies,
In other days, ere all the world grew cold.
Oh Night of other days! How mightily
Thou lurest the wandering heart's return to thee!
Thy memories fall upon the troubled soul
Like "peace" which Jesus spake to Gallilee
And bid the waters smooth their billowy sea,
And hush their wailing sounds and maddening roll.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DEGREE OF THE BURNING JEWEL.

As I passed along I saw in a temple built with Ionic pillars at its entrance, before which were colossal lions carven, what to me were the unmistakable signs of a Masonic temple.

I looked upon its wood-work and masonary and thought; "so hewed and chiseled that first craftsman, marvelling at whose skill Hiram Abif founded the guild of hewers of wood and workers in masonry. And in this strange land and among this stranger people the secrets of the craft were, even as the secrets have ever been since that day in the forests of Lebanon when the workmen, as they met or passed, silently pledged each other anew."

I sought out Jacob, the son of Aram, and asked him more of the order to which he and I belonged, its workings and effects, when, rising from his work, he led me aside and speaking in a softer tone said: "Brother, of the craft to which we belong it is lawful to speak with all free and accepted Masons. This night I go to receive the degree of the Burning Jewel in the temple by the brook Kishon; suffer me I pray thee to pass in thy name as one who seeks admission thereto and abide with me in the hour when honor befalls my father's house, for I say unto you few there be who attain thereunto—as for thine honor and worth, the master inquiring must find it good. Hinder me not, I pray thee, for my heart cleaves unto thee, though a stranger, even as it did in the hour when I first beheld thy face."

"Jacob, thou son of Aram," I made reply, "there is honesty in thy looks and my heart is wrought upon mightily by thy words. If it be lawful for a stranger to unbind his way-worn sandals and cross the threshold of thy temple door, thou mayst propose my name as one who seeks admission into the mysteries of the hidden arcana.

That night at the temple door I met once more Jacob, the son of Aram, and together we approached the door of the sanctuary betwixt the carven lions. On the summit of the Ionic columns which supported the doorway and guarded the portico were golden pomegranates carven, emblems of an older and more sacred day; the structure of the temple itself showing in its architecture that in the mind of its builder there yet abode an unconscious remembrance of the Corinthian columns, the Ionic pillars and the friezes sculptured on the temple walls of Sardanapalus in Nineveh. Here, in this western world almost within the sound of the scream of the locomotive, were the marble gods which of old were known in Assyria, whose names once were echoed in the houseless streets of Nineveh!

And now let me pause and with crossed hands even as I crossed them in the hour when I swore eternal secrecy at the altar of that temple in lost Israel when I received the degree of the Burning Jewel, aye, reverently let me ask of those silent witnesses whether I keep mine oath? Those temple doors must henceforth be forever silent—those three great lights henceforth unkindled, while the warden at the door shall keep his long unending watch! I pause to ask lest some grim spirit might return and lay hand-palm on ghostly lip entreating silence. And yet I feel I do their souls no wrong, since I am the last who e'er shall stand before their sacred urn and swear unending faith.

When Jacob, the son of Aram, and myself approached the door, the Tyler clad with helm and shield advanced his spear against

my breast and bid me stay and speak the word. I gave the sign and passed within.

At the door of the inner temple Jacob, the son of Aram, and myself were parted and he was led on within to pass through the hidden mysteries.

After awhile the Grand Warden led me forward to the door and bidding me cast off my sandals clothed me anew in raiments of white, even as novitiate nuns are robed, and then led me within. There before me was the open Torah, the square upon the door-sill, the tesseled floor and the outspread compass—all as familiar to my eyes as though I were entering a lodge in my native land. There in the old familiar triangle flamed the cabalistic lights emanating from the sacred center—there were the brazen columns with fluted carvings and golden pomegranates at the capital, the columns of Hiram Abif, named Jachin and Boaz, set up as of old at the door of the temple. There were the hour-glass, the hammer, the gold, azure, and white colors; the sacred numbers 3,5, 7 and 9 and the interlaced cords, mystic symbols of the craft not one of them wanting. I may not break oath. The words of secrecy must remain unspoken, even though the lips be dumb which heard my oath. The hunt for the missing and murdered Hiram was before me once more, even as it has been from the first days and then the Grand Master, bidding me kneel, obligated me as is the custom and began the work of conferring the degree.

"My son," said the Master, "The symbolism we teach is meant for thy good, the mysteries we reveal are lessons in life: behold and learn.

And then he brought forth a brazen urn and, laying a coal upon the incense therein, it flamed up and burned. Then the Master brought forth a precious stone, hidden beneath his girdle, and held it aloft so that the light of the burning brazier was reflected

therein and it sparkled and shone with a ruby light.

"Behold, my son," the Master continued, "the truths we teach are lessons eternal. I hold in my palm a gem of beauty, faultless in creation and perfect even as it came from the mines in the hills. To consign it to the flame nothing would justify but a lesson of deepest import. Behold and learn.

And then the Master cast it into the flame and lo as it lay on the burning coals of the censer it glowed and flamed up and burned with a reddish light.

Meanwhile all were silent: the officers in their stations, robed as is their wont, stood silent by and spoke no word till all was done and then went round the answering word and mystic sign.

Then once more the Master began: "Joseph bar Elim, thine eyes have beheld the burning jewel change till even its whitened dust lies mingled with the common ashes of another element. That which once was so beautiful and perfect is now no more. Look here! Behold a dull clod. I plucked it this day from underneath the feet of trampling men in yon wide street, spurned here and there by sandalled prince and barefoot slave—the lowliest clay, mixed with the filth and outworn dross of earth, something which each one loathes and spurns, but lo it holds the elements rare which form Earth's richest jewels. Of the Silicon it holds, let us form an amethyst, an opal, a chrysoprase and a sardonyx. Of the Aluminum it contains, let us make a sapphire, an emerald, a topaz and a ruby. Of the Soot, or unburnt Carbon, we can fashion a diamond of the purest water. Of the Calcium, or lime, which it holds, we can make a pearl of great price. And now let us group them into a diadem, such as never reposed on the brow of Earthly King: an amethyst, an opal, a chrysoprase, a sardonyx, a sapphire, an emerald, a topaz, a ruby, a diamond and a pearl, emblems of the rare and the beautiful. So canst thou see that while

the good and the beautiful may perish in life, even as the burning jewel changed, out of their very dust shall rise like the Phoenix from its ashes another and more splendid creation, verging on toward the grander and more perfect day. Nothing is forever lost. The stars disappear, but lo they return seen through the wind blown veil of the night. Even the good thou doest, though it seem to have perished, still will it rest anew, and a violet from out thy forgotten grave shall bud and bloom through the changing cycles of a thousand years!

So ended the Master. And then I was led on and up through the solemn mysteries of the degree of the Burning Jewel.

Immortality.

The paths of mighty suns of moving fire
Quivering upon the utmost verge of space;
The listening orbs along yon star-linked trace
Which girds the dome of heaven; the choir
Of thunders, breathing o'er the stormy lyre
With chords and frets of wondrous fire-swift strings;
Creation's pulse-beat, like the fluttering wings
Of some lone prisoned bird against the wire
Which shuts it in from home: All these, discerned
By him whose soul is free from treason's stain,
Say ever in his ear: "Thou'rt journeying on
To realms from which no traveler e'er returned,
Beyond the grave, beyond all earthly pain,
Into the glory of immortal dawn."

CHATER VII.

DEATH.

After receiving the degree of the Burning Jewel I abode for the night with Jacob,the son of Aram. Long we sat in the doorway with no light but the countless stars of God shining down and talked on and on, for it seemed there had sprung up a touch of an old-time friendship between us, or perhaps it was but a feeling of fraternity which bound us together in the vows we had so recently spoken in the temple by the brook Kishon.

"Jacob, thou son of Aram," I said, "hast heard of one Ahasuerus, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, now an old and strange man?"

"Nay, Joseph, many old men have I known, but of this Ahasuerus I know not. Pray tell me, brother, what thinkest thou of him."

"Nothing," I replied, "only an old, old man who desireth to depart and be no more and yet may not die."

"Strange is thy tale, Joseph, for since Israel hath dwelt in this land there have been none who have gone down to death with willing feet. When Death hath drawn nigh the Adam within hath sought to draw back, even as the soul of that first Adam did in the olden day."

"What sayest thou, Jacob?" I made reply, for I knew not the tale he would tell.

"Have you not heard, Joseph, how when Adam was come to die he would have put Death aside and lived on?"

"Nay, tell me the tale," I replied, for old age ever had a mingle of charm and terror for me and my soul was swept out and on toward the end of my own days.

For as I listened, I remembered, as the Rabbis told, how the angel of Death had stood by the side of Abraham in the guise of an old, old man, and the patriarch, whose beard swept down to his girdle and was white as the snow on crested Olivet, had said to the angel who was bent with age: "Pray, how old are you?" Then the angel answered: "I am 177." Now, Abraham was then 175, but he still bore himself erect as a Lebanon cedar, so he cried: "Alas in two more years shall I be as feeble and helpless as this? O Lord, suffer me now to depart!" and thereat, as the Rabbis tell, God stooped down and kissed him, and with that kiss he died, and lying in the burial cave Machpelah his body knew no corruption through the changeing seasons of time. So I spake again, "yes, tell me the tale." Down in their stalls I could hear the breath of the patient camels, while far above as of old were the stars, and thus the story ran:

"When our first parents were driven out of Paradise, Adam was banished through the gate of Repentance, that he might know that through it only could Paradise be regained, but Eve was expelled through the gate of Grace. Adam feel upon an island of the sea and Eve found rest in the rocks of Jedda. Then the tears of Eve fell down into the sea and were transformed into pearls, and where they fell on Earth they were changed into beautiful flowers, but her heart was heavy with grief. Then Adam and Eve wailed long and loud, till at last the cry of Eve reached Adam on the West wind, and Adam's cry was borne across the miles to Eve on the wings of the East wind and they

journeyed on till they came together where the white sands blew. Then Adam and Eve journeyed on, over sands and mountains, till once more they stood at the gate of Paradise and sought admission, but the archangel Ridhwan with the flaming sword stood guard thereat and waived them back. Then Adam demanded admission and told the angel that God had promised that they might one day return, but still the angel Ridhwan refused and told them the hour had not come. Then Adam gave a great cry, and God, seeing his sorrow, took pity on him and made a covenant with him and showed him his posterity and acquainted him with the long history and travail of Israel. When the recital had reached David, to whom God had allotted but 30 years, Adam inquired: "How many years are allotted to me?"

Then God replied: "1,000."

Then said Adam, for he thought of his sinful and miserable life: "I make a present unto David of 70 years which have been allotted to me."

Then, knowing Adam's weakness of memory, God drew up a writing and Adam signed it and they had it witnessed by the archangels Michael and Gabriel. Then the years sped on.

When Adam had reached his 930th year, the Angel of Death stood before him, but Adam refused to go, and said his time was not come.

"Didst thou not give 70 years of thy life unto David?" inquired the angel, but Adam denied it.

Then the Angel of Death drew out from under his beard the document of transfer and showed it to him. Then Adam could no longer refuse, so he drew up his feet and died."

Thus ended the tale. For a long time we sat there in silence, and then there came upon me the knowledge, that the wicked fear

death, but the just man looks into the grave and sees no terror therein. Adam, the sinful, feared mightily to die, but Abraham, the righteous, rejoiced at the change. Adam, in the fullness of years, drew back when the angel of Death drew near, but Abraham gladly yielded up life at the kiss of his God.

And then I thought of Life, what is it and wherefore? Is it a fire which burns to its going out, or is it the day-dawn touching the hills, ere the breaking of morning eternal? Beautiful, oh God, are the works of thy hand! Beautiful the worlds in yon galaxy of light! Beautiful the changing seasons of Time! Aye beautiful Death! Man only mars it all, his right hand busy unto God's undoing! And so we talked on and on, while the camels now rested quiet in their stalls, and the clear stars shone.

The Days Grow Old.

The days grow old: I reach to stay
  The whirling wheel of Time in vain:
The sands when shaken faster flow,
  The heart, when stirred by grief and woe,
Will sooner break its bonds in twain.
  The days grow old.

The days grow old; the friends of youth
  Are dead and sleep in lonely ways
Or buried in the deeper grave
  Where comes no patient Christ to save,
And bring them from forgotten days.
  The days grow old.

The days grow old; Night draws apace
  The years will fall on dateless page,
The buds shall bloom, the flowers shall blow,
  The summer birds shall come and go
When thou canst no more grow in age.
  The days grow old.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SHOEMAKER OF JERUSALEM.

The morning after I received the degree of the Burning Jewel I bade Jacob, the son of Aram, good-bye, and set out to learn more of the valley, and the people who dwelt therein. As I journeyed along I came to where a crowd were assembled about the door of a building and I could hear a man addressing them in the Hebrew tongue. Some were listening attentively and crying "Hear! Hear!" while others were jeering and scoffing him. "Better go down to the temple of Baal and convert old Mesheck," said one; "Wait till I bring Rhamrues from the temple of Ashtaroth and he will silence you," said another, and still the man spoke on—and now I was near enough to hear what he said, and to catch a glimpse of him. He was an old man, and was clad in a different garb from those about him, and while his features were surely those of a Hebrew, yet he spoke of the death and resurrection of Christ and of his second coming.

"Have done old man and move on," spake a fierce bearded man near my side. "Thou art mad of moon-sickness, or art filled with strong wine—Have done, I say, or the curse of Baal alight upon you!"

Then the stranger ceased and, as it chanced, we both passed up the same way and journeyed along together.

"Friend," said the old man to me, "you seem as a stranger in this place, so let us journey awhile together."

"Whence and who art thou?" I asked.

The stranger replied: "Since you are already known to me, Joseph bar Elim, I will tell you. I am Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew."

As one who is suddenly confronted with some startling thing, I paused and looked. This then was the man of whom my mother sang to me in the long gone days in my childhood home in farther Pommerania, when the night winds, blown from the Baltic Sea, howled and moaned in the chimney. This was the wanderer whose never resting feet had traversed the ways of the world, while the young grew old and wearied and rested. These the hands which smote the blessed Jesus of the Christian, and denied him rest as he sank beneath the burden of his cross. And then before me I saw the wonderful pictures of Gustave Dore, depicting the sorrows and heart hunger and endless journeying of this Wandering Jew, and I felt the weight of his years of sorrow rush in upon me like a sea which knows no ebb, and I said, "Hopeless man!"

"Yes," said the old man, "hopeless indeed is my lot. Nineteen centuries of world-wandering with the curse upon me, but Joseph bar Elim it is nearing the end."

Then I begged the man to tell me his wonderful story. And then he told it to me while his eyes were constantly fixed on the cross I bore on my masonic charm. And thus the old man spoke:

"First, my son, let me stand so my eyes ever may fall on the blessed crucifix you bear at your girdle; and, my son, bare your brow, as I do mine, while I reverently tell you the wonderful history of that sacred emblem which for 19 centuries has ever been in my thoughts.

"It was near 6000 years ago that an old man lay in the shadow

of his tent and over his brow the damps of death were gathering —In his face were the lines of a wicked life, for it was seared as the crevised volcano is seared with the molten lava, but within his heart even more fiercely beat the fires of remorse, while around his dying couch gathered his sorrowing children. It was Adam, the first man. Then the old man called unto Seth and said: "My son, go back unto Paradise and ask the Archangel who stands guard at the gate to give me an elixir to save me from death;" for the old man feared mightily to die, as the memories of his sins were upon him.

Then Adam continued: "Follow my blackened footprints which scorched the Earth when I left Paradise; you cannot miss them."

Then Seth hastened on, over hill and valley and desert waste and scorched dry sands till at last he stood at the gate of Paradise, and the flaming sword of the angel which stood guard thereat waved him back. Then the archangel looked down into the heart of the prostrate Seth and read therein his message ere he had time to render it, and answered him thus: "The time of pardon is not yet come —4000 years must pass ere the blessed Redeemer shall once more open the gates of Paradise to sinful man—Look within and see what man hath lost by transgression."

Then the angel threw wide the great gate of gold and fire and Seth beheld a fountain in the midst of the garden and four streams gushing therefrom. Before the fountain grew a mighty tree whose roots pierced down to Hell and wound around poor fallen man in the gulf of Sheol, and gazing up, Seth beheld on its topmost bough, lo golden fruit, but the fairest fruit was a little babe which bent its listening ear to the song of seven white doves, which circled above his head and a lovely woman bore the babe in her arms.

Then the angel shut the door and said: "I give you here three seeds taken from that wonderful tree. When Adam, thy father, is dead place these seeds in his mouth and bury him."

Three days after the feet of Seth had entered the tent of his father, Adam died, and his body was buried on Golgotha, and lo three trees sprang from his grave, leaned, and to iched, and grew together and under their shadowy branches King David sat and bewailed his sins. Thus grew the mightiest cedar of Lebanon, which Solomon sought to place in the roof of his temple but which, how as he would, he could not fit. So he cast it into the brook Kedron, and afterward into the pool Bethesda—And now my son I am approaching a most sacred hour.

I was born and reared in the city of Jerusalem, and at the crucifixion of the blessed Savior I was a shoemaker therein. Blinded by false doctrines and led on by love of applause, I was the first of all those misguided men to cry for the release of Bar Abbas and the crucifixion of Christ. Never shall I forget the blessed Redeemer as he stood there before Pilate in the Judgment hall, his mild blue eyes looking out in pity over the fierce crowd clamoring for his blood and, when Pontius Pila te had passed sentence and washed his hands, I left the hall and hastened home to gather my household for the procession would pass by my door on the road to Golgotha. And then I saw men runing here and there seeking a timber out of which to make crosses for the Saviour and the two thieves. A centurion discovered the rejected pillar of Solomon in the pool Bethesda, and out of it they fashioned the cross on which the blessed Redeemer was crucified.

I stood in the door of my shop, holding my little child in my arms, when the procession came up and the wearied Saviour sought to rest for a moment at my door, for the weight of his cross was heavy to bear, but I, most miserable man, thinking to gain applause, struck and reviled the blessed Saviour, and said: "Go faster," when turning upon me those mild blue eyes He answered: "Yes I will go faster, but thou shalt abide till I return," and then he was borne along.

I set down my child and followed. Alas I was never to see wife nor child again! Up to Golgotha and then when the soul of the Redeemer went forth that hour at evening, and the earth quaked and the curtains of the Tabernacle were rent, I felt an awful unrest course through my veins and I fled with unresting feet.

That day when I left Jerusalem, she sat throned on the hills, powerful and great, when I returned the plough-share of the destroyer had been driven across her walls, and wife and child were gone!

Three centuries from the birth of Christ once more I stood on the hill of Golgotha, and once again it was night. Again the star of Bethlehem shone in the sky, and I crept up to the place where the cross had been buried and wept through the night and cast dust on my head. At morning an old lady came, and with her a noble train and she sought the place of the crucifixion. It was St. Helena, the mother of the Emperor Constantine, coming from far Byzantium, but no one could show her the place. Then I arose and approached the saintly woman and showed her the place of the crucifixion, and digging, lo she found the cross, untouched by decay, and on it yet the inscription which Pilate had fashioned in the scorn of his heart, "Jesus, the King of the Jews." Then the saintly woman raised the cross from its grave and built over the spot a stately temple, then died: but I went forth a houseless, hated wanderer, though a thousand times I had repented the sin I did that day in Jerusalem. Three centuries thereafter the Persian came down and bore away the cross, but Heraclius, battling with Chosroes II. recovered the sacred treasure, and the night of its exaltation once more on the hill of Golgotha, yon Star of Bethlehem shone in the sky, flashed out as it does now in wonderful splendor, but again vanished, as the day of the working out of the atonement was not yet completed on Earth. Again three centuries later in a forgotten chest in the chapel

Saint Croce at Rome the cross once more was discovered where the hands of an Emperor laid it, and once again the Star of Bethlehem was seen in the Eastern sky, as though heralding the revival of the memory of Him who was born under its benignant rays in the manger at Bethlehem. And again was it seen by the Knights of Saint John blazing in the sky while they battered at the gates of Acre. All this I saw while old age came and went among men. Again I lay in a Spanish prison, awaiting the tortures of the Inquisition in 1572, and through my prison window that same star shone—the beacon which hath guided my restless bark across the ocean of years. And still in the niche in the wall of the chapel St. Croce at Rome the cross of Christ is preserved, yet to be borne in the holy procession which leads on and up to the New Jerusalem. And yonder now, after three centuries have passed, once more that self-same star is seen, blossoming out in the purple night like a flower of faith.

And now, my son, you can see why these old eyes look with such reverence on that holy emblem, associated as it is with the sacred past, and woven in with the tissues of my own poor throbbing heart—Change upon change, Empire succeeding Empire, like shadow succeeding shadow, and yet I endure, aye must endure to the end!

One day as I sat under a plane tree resting, hard by where the the road led down from Jerusalem to Damascus, a young man, with reddish brown hair and beard, led on before a company of Roman Centurions. It was Saul of Tarsus, afterward known as Paul the Apostle. I knew the man as one of the straitest of the sect of the Pharisees, for had I not seen him in Jerusalem coming and going at the house of Gamaliel, who taught at the school of Hillel? That very day he bore in his hands a commission from the High Priest in the synagogue at Jerusalem to go down into Damascus and drive out, or slay, the followers of the crucified

Christ, for the man hated the Nazarenes mightily and eagerly sought an excuse to persecute and slay them. As he drew near to where I sat, wearied with my long journeying, he asked me whether I were a Pharisee, or Sadducee. I answered I was neither. Then said Paul: "Thy life is forfeit—fall upon and slay him Centurions!" But even as one of the Centurions lifted his sword to slay, a great light shone from Heaven and the entire company fell to the ground and a voice was heard saying: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" And he answered and said: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" And the Lord said unto him: "Arise and go into the city and it shall be told thee what thou must do." And then the Centurions led him away, for he was blinded by the awful light.

Once again at Ephesus on the day of the great games I, with one other, had been condemned to fight with the beasts in the gladiatorial shows, and when the fierce Numidian lions were loosed in the arena and came bounding over the whitened sands, I, thinking to die, thinking to gain the end of my wandering, and my weary days, threw down the javelin, which the keeper had given me for a defense, and ran with open arms upon one of the crouching beasts, but even then my companion, seizing the spear I had flung to the ground, sprang upon the beast, as it rose in its leap, and plunged the spear down its open jaws, so that, shrieking, it rolled on the sands and died. Then straightway the second lion seized the man by the hip and tore him, but plucking a dagger from under his girdle he drove it under the shoulder of the beast again and again, till, weakened by loss of blood, at last its jaws loosened and it sank on the sands and died! And thereat the people of Ephesus cried out in mighty shout at the deed of the man, for he was small of stature.

As he wiped the blood from his dagger on the shaggy mane of the beast, I looked more closely into the face of the man, and lo it was Paul, whom I saw that day stricken down near the gates

of Damascus, and he knew me and greeted me not, for had I not struck the blessed Jesus whom he had learned to love, and I wished at his look that I was as the dead beasts lying in the arena! —Then Paul was led forth and hailed as a conqueror, for the man had shown a wonderful heart, but I was driven from the place with jeers and blows by Christian and Gentile and Jew, who deemed my desperation had been wrought by fear of the beasts, instead of a desire to die.

Once again I lay beneath the walls of the Circus Maximus in Rome—I had entered the city by the Appian way, footsore and weary, driven on by the restless spirit in my heart, and by the remembrance of those words and that look of reproach which the Saviour gave me that day in Jerusalem. It was night. I saw a man steal by in the shadow of the wall where I lay, and caught sight of the kingly seal on his hand and the tiara on his brow, and knew it was Nero, the Emperor of Rome. I saw him light the fagot which wrapped the Imperial city in a wall of flame and, following to mark his footsteps, I heard him on his lofty towers singing, the "Sack of Troy," while the mighty city went up in flame, and I knew that he would accuse the Christians of the deed, for he hated them and sought an excuse to persecute and slay them. At that time Paul the Apostle was released from prison and had a mighty and growing following throughout the Empire. No tongue can tell the number of Christians who died under that Emperor's reign. I saw Paul dragged before the court of judgment and the Emperor Nero, himself, sitting to hear the cause, and when he would have accused the man with setting fire to the Imperial City, I crowded past the guards, and forcing my way up to the bar of the Judgment, once more the eyes of Paul and my own met, and "Ahasuerus" was all the word he uttered, and at once he turned his face from me, but I would not that the man should die, being innocent, so I cried aloud: "Men of Rome, I Ahasuerus, lying beneath the walls of the Circus Maximus, saw with mine own eyes him who set fire to Rome, and that one was

Nero the Emperor, who sits here as accuser against this innocent man." But ere I had finished, rude hands struck me down, and when I awoke from the swoon, in which I had come nigh to Death's gate, and yet might not enter thereat, I was within the temple dungeon.

That night my prison door swung back, at the touch of an unseen hand, and the guard who stood thereat looked on, but cried not, for a great fear was upon him and his sword dropped from his nerveless hand, while his teeth chattered and his knees smote together, and, though I saw no man, yet the Centurion pointed with palsied finger into vacant darkness, as though he saw a vision therein.

Next morning at sunrise, without the city, near the Tiber gate, asking only to die as a soldier and a Roman citizen, I saw a Centurion smite off the head of the wonderful man whom, though he loved me not, I must ever remember as a MAN, for did he not smite the lions in the arena at Ephesus with mighty and undaunted heart? And, now my son, soon very soon I hope to stand with him at the Judgment, where the memory that mine was the hand which smote the blessed Jesus may be forgotten, and no more shall the mighty Paul turn his back upon me as he did in the court of Nero, and that other day in the arena at Ephesus, while the dead beasts lay on the sand.

And then when I saw him die, I passed on and once more took up the weary journey of life.

In the reign of Trajan, the Emperor of Rome, I returned to Jerusalem, for a desire was upon me to see the desolation which war had wrought, and lo the wild foxes called to each other by night across its desolate walls, and I heard not so much as a Hebrew dog bark at my passing feet! Jacob, thou son of Elim, of old I knew thy fathers, while yet they dwelt in Judea, but among thy tribe, though well-named Elim, the strong, no heart but had broke at the desolation which time and war had wrought to the children of Abraham! Gog and Magog had overrun them and

Og, the king of Bashan had despoiled them in tent and field; given up as a prey unto evil men, Oh Judea, land of my Fathers, how art thou fallen since the Kings of Earth lay tribute at thy feet, since the Maccabees wrought for thee a name on the scroll of Time!

But now I must hasten on, for why should the heart of Ahasuerus reck of the weal or the woe which hath fallen on man, since the name of the Wandering Jew hath ever been in the mouth of men a by-word and a hissing, hated by Christian because of my sin that day in Jerusalem, despised of the Jew because of my conversion to the doctrine of the Nazarene!

Slowly the years went on. Now in the populous cities of the globe, again in desert wastes my feet were found, journeying ever; three days might I abide in one place only, and then I must put out, God only knew where.

I looked upon the city of Paris when it was composed of swine herd hovels, and saw mighty London, when a few poor fishermen spread their nets on its sands.

I lay in the shadow of that mighty Monolith, known as Cleopatra's needle, just without the city of Alexandria in Egypt. It was morning. I had come from the far deserts which reach unto Nubia and my feet were wearied with travel. I looked across to the white walls of the mighty Serapion and thought: "How looked Alexandria when I saw it last?" And as I looked, I heard a mighty commotion in the city, and binding on my sandals, I hastened into the streets where a great crowd surged to and fro. It was the Nitrian monks and they had torn from her chariot a beautiful woman, and haled her through the streets and into the church of Caesareum, and there with unspeakable barbarity slew her. It was Hypatia, the beautiful Philosopher, last of the followers of the Grecian divinities, and when I had seen what these fierce men, who termed themselves Christians had done, I shook the dust of the place from my feet, and never entered it more.

How unlike was the look on the face of Peter, the Reader, as he struck down the beautiful and gifted woman, to that on the face of the blessed Jesus, when he stood before Pilate in the judgment hall that day in Jerusalem! Ah could the children of men but have known that the doctrine of Christ was not war but love, the topless towers of Jerusalem were yet pointing like fingers the way unto Heaven!

One day in Eastern Palestine, where the caravans come from Mecca and Medina to the Syrian fairs, I tarried during the heat of the day with Sergius, a Nestorian monk. As we sat at meat, for the man had prevailed upon me to abide with him for an hour, an Arab and a youth drew near, and alighting from their camels, they entered the tent and Sergius welcomed them to the simple repast of dried peas and dates. I will never forget the luster of eyes and the beautiful olive of the complexion which the youth had. Such deep, dark, wonderful eyes, once seen, never to be forgotten. It was Abu Thaleb and his nephew, Mohammed, born of the family Hashem, of the Koreish tribe, journeying with merchandise to the Syrian fairs.

That day of the summer time—it was the 15th day of the month Nisan, 587, of the Redeemer—as Sergius, the Nestorian monk, Abu Thaleb, the youth, Mohammed, and myself, Ahasuerus, sat at meat under the black tent in the desert, and as we sat we talked of the wonderful things which Christ had done, his doctrine, his death, his resurrection and ascension, and as we talked of the wrongs which the Jewish people had done Him, the black vein swelled on the forehead of the youth with rage and his eyes kindled with an unwonted fire, as he leaned and listened, forgetting to eat. Long afterward when the sword of Islam was dyed in the blood of Jewish veins and the battle axe of Mohammed beat down the gates of Medina and he had put countless Jews to the sword, I remembered that day as we sat in the tent of Sergius.

and thought of the black vein swelling on the brow of Mohammed, as he heard of the death of Christ, and I wondered if even then the youth had not vowed to humble the Hebrew pride, and visit upon their heads the sin which they did that day in Jerusalem?

Once again I saw him when he came out into the Mosque that day before he died, and heard him ask of them who were assembled if he had injured any man, and heard him offer his back to the stripes, and so saying, he went back to his couch and died. And this day, from the Pillars of Hercules all onward to the East, countless thousands will kneel with their faces toward Mecca and cry "Allah Ackbar! God is great!"

My son I dwell on these epochs in Religion, because, when the Star of Bethlehem is shining yonder in the sky, it ill becomes a follower of Christ to speak of undevout things. Yea, yea, mine eyes have seen the whirlwind of horse sweep like the breath of the Simoon across the earth and men vanish before it, like stubble before the flame, but Joseph bar Elim the end is near, and the uplifted spear shall sink and conqueror and conquered come forth to the Judgment. When my days have grown a century old, in travail of spirit my years have been wont to fall away from me, and once more I have had to take up the burden of life and to wander on like a spirit which may not be loosed in death. Ah, never shall I forget when change first came upon me! I was an old and stricken man, with a voice grown thin and small as a sparrow's. It was in the desert, where the camel merchants come and go from Yemen to Medina. I felt death's ichor in my veins, and rejoicing at the change, I drew aside in the desert and threw down my staff and lay down in the shadow of a great rock to die. Across the glittering wastes of white sands, some desert palms shook their tufted crowns to the breeze, but little did I reck of their grateful shade or the spring which I knew broke forth at their feet. Oh to die! To pass from this heart hunger! To straighten these tired feet and close these hands in rest—rest

which they had not known since that day in Jerusalem!

The afternoon sun went down like a world of fire and at last the stars blossomed out in the night, like flowers of faith, and still Death waited and came not. Out in the desert I heard a lion cough and presently it set up its terrible roar, but in it was no terror for me. I looked up into the night—that night which for 100 years had been over and above me the same—and thought of my weary days with no bright spot to illumine their dreary waste, and I turned unto death and prayed that the end should come. After awhile I heard a sudden noise near me, and with an awful cry, a wild beast landed by my side and placed its mighty paw on my breast. I knew it was the king of beasts, and, feeling that death was come, I folded my thin hands over my breast and gathered my feet together. Then lashing its sides with its tail, its eyes flashing fire, the monster lowered its head with gleaming fangs to tear my throat, when its eyes met mine, and with a despairing cry, it bounded away and was gone in the night—gone with the fever of unrest coursing its veins as the fever coursed through my own! I heard its wails die away in the distance and thereat I swooned as one dead.

When I awoke to consciousness, the morning sun shone over the hard white sands, and above me a vulture whetted its beak on the rock, but I felt the same old longings and unrest urging me on and I rose up with stern set face and went, and around me the white sands whirled. This night in Bohemia when the ban-dog bays at the moon, old women will hush their babes and say: "Lo he barks at the Ewige Jude." And in the province of Normandy children, hearing the night wind without, will whisper and say: "List to the Wandering Jew." But now let us journey on, for when the Saviour cometh my feet must not be found resting. Ah how often through the centuries gone by I have watched yon sky for the coming of the Star, knowing that one day when it shook in the vault of blue my wanderings should end and at last I

should see His coming feet shining beautiful on the hills and then I may sit down and cast off my shoes!"

So conversing, we passed on where smoke and incense was arising from a Hebrew altar. "Know you not," said Ahasuerus to the priest who was swinging the censer, "that the Christ who is soon to come again will require more at your hands than burnt offerings and savory incense?"

"Begone, scoffer," said the priest. "When the Lord of Hosts shall come, such as thou shalt knock vainly at the gates. Hast seen the Star which trembles in the East?" said the priest with a triumphant look.

"Yes," said Ahasuerus, "two Stars have I seen, one above the hills of Judea 1900 years ago, when the Christ was born, and another last night, which tells of His second coming," so saying we passed on leaving the black browed priest wondering at the altar. Before the temple of Baal we paused again, a temple built in Corinthian style with Ionic pillars; a great crowd was hurrying to and fro. It was the 21st day of December and the annual celebration in which human sacrifices were laid on the altar, to invite the sun-god Baal to return from his Southern journey. A priest passed by with reddened garments, bearing in his hands a human head on whose dead features the horror of that awful death had frozen. I groaned aloud and cried: "God do so and more unto me, if I slay him not," and clutched my weapon and brought it to a level sight. "Dog of a blasphemer, down!" said a man of lion build and struck me senseless ere I pressed the trigger.

When my senses returned I could hear the cry: "To the dungeons with them! A sacrifice is found for the feast of Baal! to the dungeons with them!" Our feet and hands were chained together and we were driven with blows and jeers through the streets—my companion spoke: "'Twas so I struck and reviled the blessed Jesus that day in Jerusalem. How often since then have I thus been scourged! But fear not, Joseph bar Elim," said he, speak-

ing in a lower tone, "they can but kill your body, as for me, iron bars and prison doors may shut but cannot hold me in, and, though I may come near unto death, yet I may not die (would that I could!) for did not the blessed Christ say unto me when I struck him and said: "Go faster, Jesus?" "yes, I will go faster, but thou shalt abide till I return."

At the mouth of the dungeon we were separated. The soldiers thrust me into an inner cell, locked and barred the door, and saying: "Tomorrow, friend, you will be with the damned," left me alone with my thoughts and the darkness.

Presently one of their number returned and saying: "Poor devil, you have only a few hours to live, so I will be gentle with you. Make merry, man, till sunrise, when you die." So saying, he took off my chains, and once more barring the door, left me.

Long I lay there and thought of the scenes through which I had passed. Oh that I was out of this ghost-haunted land! Then I sank on my knees and tried to pray. But to whom should I pray? I had NEVER prayed. And then again in my ears rang the awful words of that Catholic hymn, heard in my boyhood days, and which for six centuries had been in the ears of dying men:

"Quid sum miser tunc dicturus,
Quem patronum rogaturus,
Cum vix justus sit securus?"

And shuddering, I arose, and thought of escape. Slowly I groped about the dungeon—It was hewn in the solid rock! I felt around and around,—at last my hand touched something—I reached out again, then started back with a wild cry—I HAD TOUCHED A DEAD MAN'S FACE!

Dawn.

Thou canst not say that miracles are fled
While yonder dawn in swift and awful change
Is lit each morn at new creation's fires!
What think they on far Saturn of these rifts
Of sunshine here on Earth? Or they far off
On yonder bridge of stars, where angels cross
From Earth to Heaven to find perpetual dawn?

CHAPTER IX.

BAAL, GREAT BAAL, OH RISEN SUN!

In the farthest corner of the dungeon I crouched and hid. There against the wall on the other side, upright on his feet, a dead man stood. I fancied I could even see the lights in his sunken eyes. After the first horror had worn away, I grew calmer and listened. It was now night without. Above in the distant hall I could hear the measured tread of the sentinel as he marched silently to and fro on his beat. Even my pulse throbs sounded loud and shrill and a death-watch in the cavern wall kept ceaseless beat, measuring the seconds of my life as they flowed hurriedly into eternity!

At last indeed I was come to die! In this strange land of savage men no help could come. Yes, help could come, but only of God. Could it be that tonight the Christ of Zerib bar Elia and Ahasueras would come down, and out from these rock-hewn walls summon me and this dead man to compt? What would that black bearded priest of Baal think as he stood by our side on that Judgment day? And then I prayed that come He would ere the sun was risen, and prepared or unprepared, I would abide the result. Then my pulses would flutter like the wings of a prisoned bird, beating at the bars of its cage with a renewed desire to live, and I would start up and pry at my prison bars, but all in vain!

As the watches of the night wore on—it was now midnight, and as each new sentinel took his beat, he would shake the door of my cell and examine its fastenings. Once I started up and

seized my weapon from its sheath on my hip and said: "I will slay him when he comes near," but then I thought: "perhaps he too, like me, is but one of the helpless instruments working out the will of destiny, he too but one of the stops in the breath of time!" And I stayed my hand.

Once in the third watch—it was after the cock had crowed for midnight—I heard a low rustle at my prison gate, and I started up, believing the hour had come to die, when I heard the whispered words: "Joseph bar Elim, dost hear?" I knew it was the voice of the Wandering Jew. Then, indeed, as he had spoken, his prison doors had opened and he had walked forth!

"I hear," said I in a whisper, which seemed to me unearthly shrill.

"Know then, that while my heart bleeds for thee, yet for another I may not lift hand to save. Through all these centuries, my friendship has proven a curse to the one I loved, that so my own heart might suffer the more because of my sin that day in Jerusalem. It may be but a few hours more, for I know that Christ is near, so let us pray that He come ere the sun is risen, when you surely die. Joseph bar Elim, if we meet no more on Earth, remember me when thou comest to the Judgment—Farewell." And then I heard him passing up the stony stair,—along the hall, and heard the challenge of the sentry, and heard him cry to the guard at the gate—"I hear the passing of a man's feet, but see no man." Then all was silent as before.

I again crouched down in the farthet corner of the cell, and again I felt that lurid lights from the dead man's eyes were shining upon me, and the terror of the silence was awful. A mouse scampered across the dungeon floor, and I prayed in my soul that it would stay and keep me company, for the fear of the dead man's presence was upon me heavier than the weight of my doom. Slowly the night wore on. Once in the night I heard a far off cry from husky throats! "The Star! The Star!" and above

it again the shouts of another multitude crying, "Baal, great Baal, save us!"

So thought I. "When Christ does come, he will find the world playing the same old role which is never ended. One crying Hosannas to the Lord of Hosts; one praying to Ashtaroth, another crying, "Baal, great Baal."—So it has ever been, and will ever be—And I, a Jew, gone mad with a multitude of doctrines, know not to whom I should cry—even in the hour of my death!

And then my thoughts wandered out over that wicked city, that second Sodom—and thought of Martha, the Jewish Maiden, and her words came ringing once more in my ears: "For my heart is gladdened at thy look."

Then thought gave place to thought, and once more I wandered in the tomb of the Prophets, and saw the face of the dead Ada and over her face, since I saw it first, there had grown a look of desire, as though in the silent chambers of her heart once more had stirred the current of life, had swept up and kindled her marble cheek with the blood-red rose of love! And then I awoke to hear the tread of the soldier at my gate, to feel his hand upon my arm, and to know my time had come to die.

And then a strange desire came upon me, and I crossed over and once more touched the dead man on the face, no longer with any fear or horror, and saying to him: "We will meet at doom," passed out with the soldier and priest.. It was yet early morning. The sun had not risen, but over the faint far hills I could see his glow tingeing the skies of this last sad morning. It was Mesheck, the priest, who led the way; the same dark brow and the same vestments he wore when I lifted my weapon to slay, but in the early morning his face looked thin and chill, and in his eyes there was something which seemed to bid me to with-hold and stay my hand, and at once the power forsook me.

It was the morning of December 22nd and the sun was girdling the Earth low down on the circle of Capricorn. As I was led

along I noted the mystic symbols on his robe—there were the painted pillars of Baal, and between them the risen sun; there were the fierce fires of Moloch, and over his altar the sign of the Scorpion and on the altar the smoking heart of a human painted, the red blood trickling from its quivering lips! And now I, who had so feared death, shrunk not, but even reached out for the death, which now was so near. Slowly the priest led on. And now the multitude was gathering at the temple gates waiting an entrance. The doors of the temple fronted the rising sun, and wistfully the priest lifted his eyes to the East watching the dawning day. The gates of the temple were then thrown open and the multitude rushed in. To me it was all a dream, a passing frenzy, a phantom vision in a phantom land. Then the cry of the multitude rose:

'Baal, great Baal, we greet thy rising beams!
Hail season of returning sun!"

Then the priest bared my breast, and led me thrice around the altar chanting a weird and solemn hymn.

I looked out over the gathering of faces around me, and in their dark eyes I saw amazement mingled with adoration—such a strange weird hymn had never broke from the lips of old Mesheck before. It sounded so wild and unearthly in that still December air. Near the temple gate a commotion arose, cries and struggling, someone repeating my name, then suddenly the cry ended as if the one who struggled were smitten down; then silence fell once more and the priest led me up to the top of the altar. I cast one long, last look around. In those dark faces I saw no mercy painted and out of the cordon of spears which hemmed me in I knew no mortal could break, so I stilled my heart to calmly die. Beside me with drawn knife old Mesheck stood, his face grown thin and ashy in the grey of the morning, a look which I shall never forget in his strange deep eyes. He lifted his knife high above my head. Then over the faint far hills the sun shot

reddening up, the cry of the multitude rose wild and high:

"Baal, Great Baal, oh risen sun!
Season of lengthening day return!
On the dial thy shadow grows.
Oh Baal, we sprinkle thy altar with blood!
Return, return, life-giving sun!
Oh Baal, Great Baal, return!"

The paean ended and I saw the sharp blade quivering in the air. My last thoughts were: "So perished the dead Ada on the Hebrew altar." The bright blade fell; a wild cry filled the shuddering air: beneath my feet the altar stone sank—Above me a hand reached down and tore from the breast of a dead man a smoking heart, then holding it aloft, still chanting the same wild ode, he flung it bleeding upon the altar. Silently the stone swung up and I was left alone in the darkness, while above me the wild paean rang on, and on:

Baal, Great Baal, Oh risen sun!
Season of lengthening days return!"

Night.

No hand can stay thee in thy tireless flight,
No foot can spurn thee from thy wonted course,
Thou hast not slipt thy axle ,wondrous Night.
Through all the years of thy world-whirling force!

No jar from thy swift chariot wheel is heard,
No clash of trumpet sound thy comings greet,
The peace of God above thee, and the stars
Around thy brow, the sun beneath thy feet!

I come to thee from mad man-haunted day,
Where Mammon and ambition vend their wares
For manhood's richest dower, and kneeling here
Beneath the stars, oh Night, receive my prayers.

CHAPTER X.

ELIJAH AND THE WANDERING JEW.

When the Wandering Jew passed down the hallway of the dungeon under the temple of Baal, a cloud seemed to have girt him about so that he passed unseen out from the dreadful place and into the night. Often he looked up into the night, watching the growing light of the star of Bethlehem. Ah how often in the centuries, as he lay at night under the great wide sky, or beneath two upturned harrows some German peasant had left in the field as a mockery for his rest, he had watched for this herald of joy! To him it meant the end of his journey, the end of his heart-hunger, the finding of rest—rest which he denied unto Jesus that day when the Savior wearied at his door under the weight of his cross. And now at last he was nearing the end—Was not His star trembling above in the constellation Cassiopeia, even as it shook in the blue over the heights of Bethlehem?

All this time he was journeying painfully on, burdened with the weight of his years, his long wanderings and the look which his Saviour gave him that day in Jerusalem. At last he paused at a door and knocked—it was the house of the mother of Martha. "Peace be unto you" said Ahasuerus. The voice of the widow inquired what errand he bore.

"Let me speak," said Ahasuerus, "one word with the maiden Martha—I bear a message." In the glass and water at the mouth of the cave Zerib bar Elia had seen all that had happened at the house of the widow, and had told all to the Wandering Jew.

Shortly afterward Martha appeared and Ahasuerus whispered a few words unto her, then bidding them peace, passed on. He then turned his steps toward the cave of the Prophets, and after a short time reached the path, toiled up the rocks and entering

the passage, which looked down upon the valley, he sank down exhausted, but not to sleep. Down in the valley where the starlight glanced and shone on those Corinthian towers Joseph bar Elim was waiting to die! When the first beam of the morning sun should redden the world, Mesheck, the black-browed priest of Baal, should do him to death at the Eastern pillars as a sacrifice, lest the sun-god Baal should cross the girdle of Capricorn and never return. Down there was the world in miniature—a cosmos. Every craving of the human heart, every vaulting ambition had place—while his breast longed for one, and only one thing—the day of Judgment, that he might find rest. So the night wore on with his gaze ever fixed on the place of the Bethlehem Star.

In the morning he found Zerib bar Elia, and the ravens bring him food, and he told the Prophet all.

"Let us eat," said the seer, "for mighty things are in the womb of Time, and soon will appear."

When they had eaten, the Prophet once more brought the goblet of water, shook it and bade Ahasuerus tell him what he saw. Before his gaze passed the priest, and soldier, and altar, and cry of the multitude; the blow, the fall and the smoking heart, and he told the Prophet all.

"Look no more," said the seer, "since that day of old on Mount Carmel when at my command the fire of the Lord fell and licked up the sacrifice on the altar, aye, even the water in the trenches about it, these prophets and priests of Baal have been a thorn in the side of Israel. Oh that they were broken once more at the brook Kishon, as on the day when I summoned the cloud out of the sea, over the heights of Carmel! And say, Ahasuerus, tell me of the world lying about—what say they of the star, and the day of Judgment so near at hand?"

Then spoke the Wandering Jew: "They of the Aborigines, called Indians, have seen the star, and dance the Messiah dance, but strangely confuse the worship of the Lord of Hosts with the

worship of Baal. Even the rulers are fearful lest in their frenzy they slaughter and kill, and guards are stationed about them, but the Messiah dance goes on through all the tribes. Down there in the valley, as thou knowest, Israel hath forsaken God and kneels at the altar of Moloch, while the priests of Baal and Ashtaroth vainly mis-read the stars and interpret the portents of sky and Earth unto the glory of their idolatrous worship."

The Prophet started up, and a look of fire kindled in his deep eyes and he spake in the spirit of anathema: "So, so, were not the wicked of Sodom and Gomorrah uplifted in their pride so high that they who stood on the parapets of Heaven heard a cock crow in Sodom and a dog bark in Gomorrah, and then they fell, and were buried under the sea of Asphaltum and the waters of bitterness?"

"Aye, aye," said Ahasuerus, "most true; and the day of the retribution is nigh unto all those who follow the idols of sin, from the dwellers in the uttermost islands afar off, even to the foot of that brook Kishon where it enters yon sun-kissed hill. Are the signs not come to pass? Are the stars in the heavens not found in their appointed places? Are the wars not ended which were foretold of old? John, the Divine, is lying asleep at Ephesus, untouched by the mould of the tomb, waiting the summons to rise and bear witness against Anti-Christ. In the city of Sarros, Joseph of Arimathea drinks immortality from the goblet Saint Graal."—And so through the morning, these two old men talked on, of the past of Israel—and the glory of the coming King.

But time cannot change it nor distance!
Though crushed by the wheels of its Idol,
'Twill rise like a spirit and follow
With hands held out in devotion;
Only can Death with his sickle,
Which gathereth the uttermost living
In windrows of dead in the grave,
Encompass the love of a woman.

CHAPTER XI.

MESHECK UNVEILED.

When the altar stone sank from beneath my feet, I found myself dropped into a darkened passage, through which no ray of light could penetrate from the outside world. The chamber was scarcely longer than the length of a man laid prone, and then the thought ran through my mind, that I was in the pit where the dead of the sacrifice were thrown. What could it all mean? Did the black-browed priest intend me for some more horrible death, or why had he spared me at all; and who was that other dead man lying only a few feet above my head? Surely he was dead and had been laid there by Mesheck—as I saw the hand of the priest reach down and tear from the breast of the dead man, his yet smoking heart and fling it above on the altar. Was there some mistake, or was I entombed alive, a companion for the other dead who might yet house with me, or would the priest yet come and lead me away to other and a worse death?

I waited in silence scarcely daring to breathe, as over my head I still could hear the cry of the multitude:

"Baal, Great Baal, oh risen sun!"

After awhile, I could not tell how long—it seemed an age—

the sounds ceased, and all was quiet.

All day long I listened and waited, expecting each moment to see some wolfish face peer down that passage-way from above and give the alarm. When night came, I intended to try and escape under the cover of darkness. I waited till the cocks crowed for midnight, then made ready to escape, but up those sheer walls no foot could climb. Presently I heard a step approaching along some under-ground hall-way. It drew near to my cell, then sliding back a bolt in a hidden door, it noiselessly entered, holding a lamp aloft. It was Mesheck, the priest of Baal. I had crouched down to spring at his throat, not daring to shoot for fear of being discovered, but when I saw that he was alone, I took courage and knew that he meant me no present harm.

"Joseph bar Elim," said the priest, "dost know me?"

"Thou art Mesheck, the priest of Baal," I answered.

"Then take thou this lamp and turn unto me thy back for a moment—I mean you no harm," spoke the priest.

I did as he bid.

"Now look," said the priest.

I turned; and lo before me, stripped of the priestly robe, stood the maiden Martha!

With a low cry I folded my arms about her and kissed her on the forehead—then weakness seized me and I lay my head on her shoulder and wept for very joy.

"But where is Mesheck, the priest of Baal?" I asked after a little.

With a wave of her hand she answered: "His spirit is in Tophet, his body, above you on the shelf, and his heart lies bleeding above on the altar."

Then once more in my ears came the echo of those first spoken

words: "For my soul is gladdened at thy look," and I knew that the maiden loved me, and because of that great love had slain the priest, Mesheck, and served in his stead at the sacrifice, and I thought to myself "in the memory of men there abides not such another."

Then she once more took the candle and led the way through a long succession of underground galleries, till we reached the stair which led to the chamber of Mesheck. Here we paused to listen, and hearing no noise, we ascended and passed out into the street, leaving the mantle of Mesheck behind.

Once in the darkness, we passed rapidly onward and soon gained the home of Martha, where the mother, well nigh distraught, had waited her coming so long. She gave the mother an excuse of having risen early and visiting with a friend at a distance, and as I had returned with her, the matter was passed by and seemed forgotten.

On the morrow I cut my beard in the fashion of the country, and for a few pieces of silver, Martha was able to purchase me clothing of the pattern worn in the city that no one, seeing, would discover me.

That day Martha taking her timbrel and once more sitting at my feet, as Jewish maidens are wont to do, played and sang the song of Saul's victory. Her voice was delightfully sweet, except when she struck the high treble of war and then at times I thought it sounded like the paean she sang at the altar of Baal. In a form so frail what a lion heart! What was the driving of the nail through the temples of the sleeping Sisera by the woman Jael, or the lowering of the spies over the wall by the maiden of Jericho compared with the work of yesterday? And was it not done for me? And yet when I looked at that small right hand,

and remembered that it had guided the knife to the heart of that priest of Baal, I almost feared her. I almost deemed her love some terrible thing—a wild beast fondling you now, but which aroused, would slay. There is a love, which is soft and gentle as an April shower, and there is a love, which is as the torrent from the opened window of Heaven; choose, ye who would choose. And yet was the maiden not gentle of mien, and lovely as an houri, and did I not owe her all? Had she not placed her head in the lion's jaws; aye, gone down into the valley of Death itself for love of me? And yet was my heart not there in the tomb of the dead Ada, the daughter of the warrior Jephthah? Will they who are wiser than I answer, why my heart should have gone out in love for one who died 3,000 years ago, and who now was sleeping in her silent tomb? Was it because in her virgin heart the passion of love had never thrilled and the kiss of love had never imprinted the rose of her lip, or was it because she looked so like the face of my lost love Rachel? I cannot say.

Then the maiden sang once again, and wild and high rang out her voice in the song of Miriam.

War, war, in this land of lost Israel, as of old when they dwelt at Samaria and the army of Sennacherib lay dead at Jerusalem!

"Sing me the song of "The Building of the Temple," I said when she laid down her timbrel to rest.

"I sing only of love and war," said she, laughing, "the two chords which vibrate alike in every heart, and then she sang the "Song of Deborah and Barak."

When she had finished the song, she laid aside her timbrel, and sat silently observing me, with a strange light in her eyes. I did not know then what it meant. My eyes were better at read-

ing the value of merchandise than in dealing with the subtler matters of a woman's love, so I did not guess more than half the truth.

And then she told me the story of the loves of Joseph and Zuleika, while she idly beat upon her timbrel, and thus the story ran:

"The sun was about to set when the Arab merchants with Joseph, the Hebrew captive, entered Heliopolis, the chief city of Egypt. The face of the Hebrew slave shone more brightly than the rays of the sun, so that the shadows of the towers fell toward the West and all the women and maidens ran out on the terraces and pylon towers to see the beauty of the captive boy. Next day, before the palace of the king, the captive was placed for sale, and all the wealthy ladies of Heliopolis sent their husbands or relatives to bid for the beautiful youth, but Potiphar, the king's treasurer, bought and presented him to his wife Zuleika, who was young and lovely as an houri. From her window in the temple, one day Zuleika saw an Ishmaelite pass where Joseph was working in the garden, and the camel which the Ishmaelite led, turned and bowing down, shed tears over the feet of the Hebrew captive, for years before in the far off land of Israel Joseph remembered having fed it with bread in the caravans which belonged to his father Jacob. When Zuleika saw that even the dumb animals loved the captive, she sent for him and told the beautiful youth all her secret passion for him, and at the sight of the lovely young woman, Joseph had well nigh fallen, but even then, he saw the spirit of his father in the doorway and heard him say: "Joseph, hereafter when the names of thy brothers, engraven on gems, shall adorn the breast-plate of the High Priest shall thine be absent from among them?"

Then Joseph scorned her love, and the love of a woman scorned changes to flame which will burn more fiercely than the fires of Gehenna.

It is written in the books of the Midrasch, how Zuleika falsely accused the Hebrew, and had him confined for seven long years in the dungeons of the temple.

Afterward, it so fell out, that Pharaoh, the king, had a dream which none of the wise men could read. So they sent for Joseph who interpreted the riddle, and afterward calling upon Zuleika to confess her sin in falsely accusing him, she could no longer deny it. Then was Potiphar and his beautiful wife Zuleika driven out from the king's presence and Joseph was put in his stead.

One day as the chariot of Joseph rolled through the gates—he had now risen to ride in the second chariot of Egypt—a beggar woman sat by the way. He handed her some pieces of silver, and she said: "I should not receive them at your hand, although it was by me you first reached the ladder of exaltation." And Joseph looked into her face, and lo the beggar was Zuleika, Potiphar's wife!

He questioned her of her husband and she replied that shortly after the loss of his place of honor with the king he had died, broken in body and mind. Then said the woman: "Thou hast thought evil of me, but I have great excuses, thou wast so beautiful, and, moreover, I was young."

Then, as the Midrasch says, Joseph took her home till the roses once more bloomed in her cheeks, then led her to the marriage altar, and they lived long and happily together. So true love conquers at the last."

And so the day wore on. Many stories did she tell me of the customs of her people; how each year at the feast of Purim, Haman still led the horse of Mordecai, and proclaimed his name through the streets. Then, again, she recounted to me the lament of the daughters of Israel, for the lost Ada, the daughter of

Jephthah, the warrior Gileadite; how each year upon the mountains, four days they went up and down bewailing her early death.

At the sound of her name, once more my soul was swept along like a leaf in a gale, for the springs of my soul had been touched that day in the tombs of the Prophets, and a madness of love had fallen upon me which knew no rest. Back, back to the tombs I must go, to gaze once more on her marble face, sleeping the long years through, while fretful kingdoms of Earth had risen and vanished like clouds in a summer sky.

When the evening had come and the darkness had grown sufficient to conceal my steps, I bade them farewell once more, and set my face towards the tomb of the Prophets.

Shall I forget, can I forget
The hallowed scenes we knew so well
In youth's rich hours of love and joy,
While all the summer days swept round
Rich crowned and perfumed with the bloom
That breaks and dies in love's high noon?

Shall I forget, can I forget
Across the miles, across the years
The joy, the thrill of that blest hour
When love lit up our pathway bright
As though some mighty burst of day
Should fall across a starless world!

Shall I forget, can I forget?
Nay memory lives, though years are flown
Across the night a bird sings sweet,
And all my pulses thrill once more,
The years recede; Oh rapturous days!
Oh radiant hours we passed of yore!

CHAPTER XII.

KING SOLOMON'S SEAL.

While I journeyed along I thought of the Wandering Jew, what had become of him and where would I meet him again, if ever. I looked above in the heavens, and there the Star of Bethlehem was shining on, out of the depths of the deep dark night. Here in this hill-locked valley the storms of winter rarely if ever broke with the fury known to other lands. The night air had a bracing effect upon me and the nearer my steps approached the tomb of the Prophets the more buoyant my spirits became. After all I was saved from the jaws of those hungry wolves at the altar of Baal. I turned to look at the city lying below me with its halo of evening lights. There was the temple of Jehovah, where Ahasuerus and I had seen the Hebrew priest with his burning censer before the altar, and I thought of the words he spake to Ahasuerus: "Hast seen the star?" and the words of of reply: "Two stars have I seen." Over there within a bowshot of the tomb of the Prophets, was the temple of Ashtaroth with its pillars facing the morning and evening star. Even now I could

hear from the altar of the goddess the song of the vestal virgins singing:

"Ishtar, Bringer of good tidings,
Hail, hail, thou evening star!
At the touch of thy beams the barren conceive!
Ishtar, "Bringer of good things, hail!

Then for a moment the paean ceased and I looked across to the temple of Baal and thought of the dead priest Mesheck lying beneath the altar, and under its dungeon walls I thought once more of the touch on the dead man's face!

I turned and climbed the pathway which led up to the tombs and sat down at the mouth of the cave. Below lay the city outstretched to the river's rim. The moon was shining with her orb well rounded, touching both temple and tower with the same old wonted light, but beneath the mantle of peace which night swept round, I knew that a false world lay. There at the shrine of Ashtaroth maidens were offered unto lust and desire, or slain at the western pillar of sacrifice that the barren might bear. In the glancing moonlight I could now discern the snowy limbs of a virgin lying on the altar, while up in the night rose the paean song:

"Ishtar, Bringer of good things!
Star of the evening, hail!"

Long I sat and looked out over this land, now filled with a thousand discordant cries, soon to be hushed into silence forever. My soul was filled with the events of the past few days. At last the noises in the temples ceased, and the lights in the city were extinguished. I heard the voice of the watchman, as he passed to and fro on his beat above the towers of the temples, crying aloud: "Mid-night, and all is well," and voices repeating the cry far down the valley till it died in the distance. Here where the throat of innocence was bared to the knife and virgins were done to death, to atone some wrong, or appease some god, the cry of

"All is well" sounded in my ears like a laugh from the pit of Gehenna!

At last I arose and lighting a brazier, which I had seen before in a nook in the wall, I stole down the hall-way and directed my steps as noiselessly as possible toward the tomb of the Prophets. I thought I would look once more on the face of the dead Ada, for the memory of the dream I had that night in the dungeon below the temple of Baal, wherein I saw a look of desire over her features, was still in my soul, and though I died as I looked, still I would risk it all—for what part had I in the coming of the Messiah—mine but a breath in the hurricane of God which blew on the sails of destiny!

At the door of the tomb I paused and listened—here no sound of the outer world could penetrate—no cry of the world, gone mad, could come. Silence as awful as on that morning of creation, when darkness brooded on the nest of chaos!

I touched the spring which Zerib bar Elia had pressed, when silently the great door opened, and I entered the chamber of the dead which never before had been trod by the feet of profanation. In the darkness my burning brazier flickered and gave but a narrow circle of light. Slowly and fearfully I advanced between the streets of the dead. Nearest the door were the later kings and Princes of Israel, names unwritten in the Talmud and Torah; farther back were the dead of the olden time, ranged as they died.

Beside Abraham was the dust of the tall and queenly Sarah; beside Isaac was the dust of the comely Rebekah; beside Jacob was all of her who had once been the lovely Rachel—all sleeping quietly on in their antique coffins with the story of their lives written upon their winding cloths.

I approached the sepulcher which held the dead Ada and slowly and reverently lifted the cloth from her face. There were the lovely features still perfect as on that day when with flying

feet she came down to meet the hosts of her father returning from smiting the Ammonites by Arnon. There was the perfect mouth which kissed her warrior father and parted again in surprise at his sorrowful greeting, perfect as on the day of her death, when as the loveliest victim which ever was laid on the altar of sacrifice, she gave up her life that her country might live. And here untouched by the finger of change or decay she slept, like a statue of Parian marble, while centuries went by like a watch in the night! In the shadow of the orange trees, love had whispered its tale through the cycles and changes of 3000 years, but into her ear no tale of love had ever been poured, and above her no heart had ever throbbed with passion but mine. And I knew as I stood there that I loved her, though she slept in pathetic dust, and her heart had been stilled 3000 years.

Oh could I but but blow the breath of life into that breast and see the red blush mounting those cheeks! Even as I stood and desired, I thought I saw a smile pass over her lovely features, and saw the red blood climbing up her veins. And then far away in my home in farther Pommerania, in Kolberg on the Baltic, I remembered a story which my mother told to me, and a wild desire rose up in my soul, a resolution, something akin to the great, and I crossed over the chamber and approached the sarcophagus which held the mummy of King Solomon. Above his coffin a great snowy owl sat and hooted. Its huge eyes gleamed and shone with a sulphurous light and its hootings echoed and re-echoed down the long line of the chambers of the dead. My heart stood still, then rocked in my bosom like a storm tossed boat for a fear was upon me, but I frighted the great owl away. Then it flew above and taking a perch on the wall looked on with great wide eyes which seemed to look into my very soul, but my heart was wrought up to desperate things, and though demons had stood in the way, I should have passed, even through Sheol, so haunted me the face of that dead maiden, looking up as though

appealing to me to call her back from the shores of doom. I placed the brazier on a shelf of the tomb and with hurried hands undid the wrappings which swathed the great king round. The outer winding was of a texture woven of fine sea-grasses, brought in the ships from Tarshish, and on it was the story of his reign and death, written in Hebrew letters. I stripped this covering back from his breast and laid bare the second. It was woven of the finest camel hair, and on it was the picture of the bull-god Apis, in commemoration of the religion of Egypt introduced by the daughter of Pharaoh, whom the great king led to the marriage altar. The third, and last wrapping was made of the finest texture of all—what it was I could not tell, but on it was painted a throne, and a woman seated on the throne, and below it in Hebrew letters were the words "Balkis, Queen of Sheba"—Nearly 3000 years had come and gone since the hands which painted that quiet epic had fallen into ashes and mingled with the dust of Judea, and here before me were those simple words, saying little, yet saying much, telling in confidence the story of the great king's love—"Balkis, Queen of Sheba," nearest in life, and still nearest the dead king's heart.

With wild swift hands I stripped this last wrapping aside and removed the embalming cottons and preparation of spices and before me lay the shrunken breast, which one time ruled the world. I sought in vain for trace of Schamir, or amulet, or Talisman, or Seal.

Then indeed my hands had profaned the sepulcher of the great king and despoiled the wrappings which loving hands had wound. With despair in my soul I turned to replace the winding cloths, but even then, the great owl shrieked and shrieked again, and flapped wide wings. What could the great bird mean?

Once more I turned to search. I lifted the great king's hands from his shrunken breast, and lo in the hollow of his right hand, "Solomon's Seal," and drawing it forth, I held it to the light and

on it I read the Name Incommunicable Schem hammporrasch! And thereat the great owl shrieked and laughed, and the echo of that laugh I know will be heard in the land of doom!

Then a great fear fell upon me, for there on the dead king's face sat a ghost and rocked and gibbered, and I fled from the awful presence up to the further end of the gallery, near the grot where the dead Ada lay, but my fingers still clung to the great king's seal. Then the great snowy owl flew down, and took up its perch over the tomb and looked on with the light still glowing in its baleful eyes, while the ghost still sat on the dead king's face. And then my heart grew bolder, and though I died, still I deemed it worthy the cast of the die, whether the Talisman of Solomon still held its power. On the great king's seal were the secret words on which no one might look and live lest he speak the Name Incommunicable, Shem hammporrasch, but I lifted the cloth from the dead Ada's brow and holding aloft the great king's seal I invoked her spirit's return, and my words rang strange and wild in those corridors of the dead, with the lurid eyes of the great owl looking on, while the ghost still rocked on the dead king's face.

"Spirit of the dead Ada, come back from the land of doom! Return ethereal soul from the place of thy rest, return! In the name of the divine One, whom it is profanation lightly to name—Name Incommunicable, Shem hammporrasch, I invoke you, return!"

I paused to look. On her features there rested the same sweet look of old, the divine incarnation of beauty, but no stir which the world calls life. Could it be then that the wonder working power of the Talisman was gone, and that no virtue rested therein to call back the dead from their places of rest? Once more I prayed while the great owl sat on its perch and the ghost still rocked on the dead king's face: "By the spirit of fire I invoke you, by King Solomon's seal on which is the Name Incommunicable, Shem hammporrasch: by the spirits of the Prophets who

sleep here in unanswering graves; from Heaven or Hell I invoke you, return!"

But still the dead Ada slept on, and no thrill of life could be seen im her veins. Then the great owl hooted and laughed and the ghost still rocked and gibbered on the dead king's face. My soul sank down in despair. Then in my utter extremity I lifted my hands once more, still holding the great king's seal and prayed: "By the spirit of Love I bid you, come back from the land of doom!"

I bent down and kissed her with the kiss of love, kissed her on the lips Then the great bird flew off into the shadows, the ghost disappeared from the dead king's face, and up from her world-old couch the dead Ada rose, with the current of life now coursing her veins, as though she had taken but a short, sweet sleep!

"Who calls?" said the maiden.

"Love calls," answered I. Then she straightway arose and casting her grave wrappings from her, stood forth in a mantle of white, the bloom of youth now mantling her cheeks to the rim of her lotus-lipped mouth! Tall! how tall she seemed there in the crossing shadows! Like a moonbeam thrilled and aglow with the spirit of life! A statue of glorious pink and pearl! Beautiful as on that day of old when she bared her white bosom to the knife on the altar of sacrifice on that faraway Judean hill!

"Ada," said I, "art awake?" for I could not fully realize all this wonderful thing.

"Surely," said the maiden, and her voice was low and sweet as the soul of melody—was melody, "I awoke at the first call."

"Did you not hear my earlier calling?"

"No," said the maiden, "I heard but the call of Love to arise."

For a moment I stood, and there in the chamber of the dead

a great thought struck along my brain, like lightning across the void of the night, that no Talisman but love can waken and thrill in the darkness and gloom of the grave!

Then straightway the maiden crossed over and kissed me on the lips, kissed me with a maidens first kiss of love and uttered the words: "Joseph bar Elim, Love waiteth long at the gates, and is not awearied."

When I heard the maiden calling me by name, for a moment I stood amazed; and then I remembered that far away in the centuries past only the River Jordon divided the land of Judah, the tribe of my fathers, from that of Gilead, in which Jephthah, the father of Ada, was born. And then like a wave from some long forgotten memory, the tremor returning after the tide is gone out, the spirit of sound creeping back when the echo is fled, there swept across my soul the awakened knowledge, that in the silent past the risen Ada had known, aye, known and loved one Joseph bar Elim, like unto me in form and face. And then I knew that in the eternal coming and going of souls on earth, in a former life, in another land, that form and face she loved was my own, else why had I lingered so long at her tomb, why had my soul instantly known and loved her, aye, loved her with an older and stronger love than it ever bore toward my long lost Rachel? And then I remembered the dream I had that night in the cave of the Prophets, and the echoing walls repeating my name broke and ended my reverie.

On the stony floor at our feet as we trod, flowers pranked and bloomed like the pathways of Eden, so Love lifteth up the soul of the world. Let him who hath never loved scoff at the tale of love, but love, and love only, lives on through the night of the tomb and blooms once more in the asphodel fields of bliss!

We passed out through the hallway, all the old spirit of unrest gone, in the crossing of close linked hands, and bent our steps

toward the mouth of the cave, which looked out over the valley, sleeping on in the gray of the morning.

I looked up into the night and the Star of Bethlehem shone on, but it seemed to have lost something of splendor—grown paler than its wont, in the dawning of day. Down there in the valley at the temple of Baal, I noticed some stir in the night, but thought no more of it then, but long afterwards it flashed over my mind, like lightning athwart the rack of the storm.

As we stood at the mouth of the cave and gazed out over the valley, I pointed toward the Star and said: "What think you, Ada, of the Star and the coming of the Christ?"

For a long time she looked, and over her features as she gazed, there passed an expression of thought, a wave as it were of some forgotten memory, and she said: "Yes the star is the same which shook in the Midianitish sky when Joshua crossed the Jordan."

I saw she was thinking yet of the olden time and in her simplicity was talking of days gone by in the misty past, when long ago, ere the heavens were gauged by an astronomers compass, longing eyes looked up into yon chartless blue in search of this self same star.

"Yes," said the maiden, "it fore-runs a mighty deliverer for Israel, who shall break the Ammonitish bondage and level their temples low."

Here in the breast of this Hebrew maiden, whose memories were older than the Acropolis, or the templed Tiber, the same old longing dwelt; a reaching out for some coming Christ, who should break the bonds of the slave and redeem the world.

"We have waited long for his coming," continued the maiden, "and hereafter when the deliverer has put his foot on the neck of the oppressor, our harness shall no longer be burnished for war, nor our shields clash wildly fierce in the front of the battle."

And then she continued: "Last night I dreamed a dream and to me it is a riddle beyond my power to interpret: I dreamed that I lay in my chamber in the tower by the gate of Mizpeh, through

which my father, Jephthah, and his soldiers passed as they led on and out toward the land of Ammon. I thought in my sleep that my lute, which hung on my chamber wall above my couch, was stirred by the breezes which swept in through the opened window and it sang a low, sweet strain, and as it seemed, repeated over and over my own name, "Ada," and with that sound in my ears, I awoke, and lo the blossoms of the rose tree under my window were blown into the chamber and had twined about the strings of my lute, forming as it were a garland, as it still sang on and on, sweet singing my name. Then I turned and lo an old man stood in the open door, and his beard reached down to his girdle and was white as the beard of Abraham, on the day when the Angel Azrael told him it was intended as a mark of gentleness. Then the lute ceased singing and the old man lifted his head and spoke: "Ada, thou daughter of Jephthah, dost love thy Israel?"

And then I replied: "Father thou knowest my heart"

Then once again the old man spoke: "Should the vows of thy father remain unbroken?"

"Verily, master, that even so God may remember his promises to Israel," I answered.

Then again the angel continued: "Ada, thou daughter of Jephthah, if Israel might live wouldst thou yield up thy life and die?"

"Father," I answered, "life to me has been very sweet, but thou knowest my heart, and am I not a daughter of Israel?"

Then the old man vanished, and once again the lute took up the refrain and sang on and on the praises of my name, and thereat my sleep was broken by the call of your voice to arise. And say, Joseph bar Elim, canst tell me the meaning of the dream?"

"Nay, Ada, I have no skill at reading such mysteries; let it pass I pray you, it bodes nothing strange," I answered, even while in my heart a fear and presentiment arose, I knew not

what, so I sought to pass by and forget the matter which had taken such a hold upon me!

"What shall we do, Ada?" I asked, for the morning was beginning to break, and my heart was almost led to believe that after all this world was for a few days longer only, and in that last hour, what matter where it found me so I was only with her I loved? In the weird world I had known in the few days past, I was beginning to lose my old-time self, so that I, even I, Joseph bar Elim, was drifting on with the whirl and throng of believers in the coming of a Messiah and the Judgment day—so I spake again not waiting an answer—"Let us pass down and abide awhile with friends in the valley."

So hand in hand, as two children, who pluck the blue-bells and the heart-ease rare, we passed down through the early morn.

No stir was yet abroad in the valley, so we journeyed straight on to the house of the widow, where none but the mother was yet awake.

You will remember that lovely winter—lovely even where storms most loudly roar, but here in this hill-locked valley the wine of sunshine filled it brimming o'er, and nature asleep, seemed near to stir in the winter's night, so that the world seemed touched with a fore-felt change and the winter was thrilled with a glorious warmth. The door was ajar in the home of the widow, so we entered the house, and greeted her with peace and good will. Shortly afterward, Martha arose, and the meeting of the two maidens I shall never forget. Both were tall and fair to look upon, but Ada was as the white rose, pure and lovely; Martha, as the red rose, abloom with the pencillings of morning. One, soulful and clinging, the other, strong in her womanly affection, oh rarely strong! Two types of womanhood—choose, you, who may.

I had then no skill in reading the book of a woman's heart, else I had never brought the risen Ada to the home of Martha. I felt, rather than saw, in their meeting glances, a something which never flashes except from the eyes of a jealous woman. It

is not as fire, for it burns more deeply, it is not as a sword, for it cuts more keenly—time cannot temper, nor distance assuage a woman's thwarted love, and the fires of Gehenna can no more blight the flowers which bloom in the garden of her heart!

As the two maidens passed over and kissed each other on the cheek, with the kiss of recognition, I noted their faces and forms. One, with the Hebrew beauty of the olden day, the other, with the strength of a later world stamped strongly on forehead and face. In the heart of the risen Ada was sunshine and the music of singing birds, in the heart of the maiden Martha were serpent tongues of jealousy astir with red-forked hate. (Ah how easily the singing birds change song and plume for the hiss and scale of reptile hate!) The two maidens greeted each other in a friendly manner but in the actions of Martha there was a cold reserve and a strained courtesy. She knew, at a glance, there was another who had barred her way to the heart she would win.

The day wore on, and I felt that we might not abide longer there. Once in the afternoon hours as we sat at the Western door, and Ada had laid down the harp and had finished the song —which to a Hebrew never grows old—the song of the constancy and love of the Moabitess Ruth—I noticed beneath the girdle of the Maiden Martha the glittering handle of a dagger hid, (The knife with which she had slain the priest Mesheck) and I saw her eyes fixed constantly on the face of the risen Ada, which was now radiant with the spirit of the song, and I remembered the story she had told me of the slighted love of Zuleika, and the punishment she visited on Joseph in the dungeons of Egypt, and I shuddered and cast about for an excuse to depart. But where could we go? No longer dared we remain in the home of the widow, and in the tomb of the Prophets I dared not face Elijah and Ahasuerus, lest the desecration of the great king's tomb were by this time known, and the risen Ada discovered.

When the sun stood over the Western hills, I went down to the

spring, whence on that first morning Martha had brought me water to drink, on the day when I first entered the valley. As I came upon the highway, I once more met Jacob, the son Aram, from whom I had parted but a few mornings before. That day there was calmness in his face and action, but now there was wildness and a look of despair, as he approached me with hurried feet and hoarsely explained: "Blessed be Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, that once more I see thee alive! I fought my way toward the altar of Ball to save thee, but strong arms struck me down, and yet art thou living!" and then he continued: "Joseph, well-named son of the strong, there is that in thy face which assures me that thou art a MAN, and one who hath kept sacred the covenants of King Hiram's craft, therefore my heart trusts you above other men, and I ask you for counsel in my great extremity."

Then I answered, and gave the signal on which every true mason has relied, from the days of Hiram Abif to the present hour and bade him speak on.

Then hurriedly the man continued: "This morning at the spring, when the daughters of Israel were giving water to their flocks, a horde of the Ephraimites stole upon them and bore them away. Amongst them was Rachel, the light of my soul, who ere the new moon should round from its crescent, was to have been led to the altar my bride. Even this hour I first heard it, and lo I am on my way to saddle my camel to give chase to the pursuers, and rescue the maiden or die! For know you, Joseph bar Elim, the splendor of noon is darker than midnight without the light of her face—and woe betide the Ephraimite who lays violent hand upon the lovely Rachel, the most priceless gem in the land of Israel! With spear I shall make passage through their closest array and reach the heart of the despoiler!"

And then I thought of the weapon I bore on my hip, and drawing it forth I said: "Jacob, my friend, I give you here a messenger, which deals death more surely than spear or sword, and which harness nor shield can turn aside."

Then I showed him my revolver, and taught him its use, and bidding him be strong, I buckled the belt about his loins. In a short time I saw a man mounted upon a camel, and riding so swiftly that the earth fled under its feet, and soon it was lost to sight in the distance.

As I stood there looking down into the limpid depths of the spring, I felt another's presence near me, and gazing up I saw Martha standing near, observing me with sad, strange eyes

"Joseph bar Elim," said she, "You are going away—I read it in your looks, and in the red leaves of my own heart. Before you go I have something to say. It is not lawful, we are told, that a woman should tell her love, but mine is so great that it must be told. Of old, Ruth lay down at the feet of Boaz that he might know that her heart went out to him in submission and love. Those days are fled, and yet I must tell you, with maidenly modesty, the love I bear you"

She paused and I looked at her there in the setting sunlight, portentous of the close of her day dream of love and its hush of night. There was that in her soul and bearing which spoke of a descent higher than the average Hebrew, the lowest of whose tribe is greater than any of the gentile kings of Earth.

"You look upon me," she continued, "as some poor child which hath but a fleeting passion, but know you, Joseph bar Elim, when I slew the priest, Mesheck, I fully expected to die in atonement, but thou knowest I did it because of my great love for thee.

"I know that the lily maiden who came here in the early morning, with the starlight in her eyes, is fairer than I, but in the hour of thy need no foot will more swiftly fly than that of her whom thou now despiseth—speak, I pray you, for my heart is nigh to break."

"Martha," said I, "thou knowest our ends are destined by a

higher power than our own weak will. The bird wots not the wisdom of its nest-masonry under the temple eaves, yet it builds and weaves unquestioning. On the ocean of life our sails are set, but it is on a chartless sea, and we anchor in unknown ports on the farther shore. We may not shape our destinies. The breath of divinity wafts us on; one, upon the breakers, another, into a quiet bay."

Then said the maiden, "you but trifle with me."

"Nay, Martha, I trifle not—I speak but plainly. My heart is yonder with the maiden whom you say has the starlight in her eyes. I may not resist the will of destiny. I can never repay you for your kindness to me in the hour when it steaded me most, but it were better now that I should go away into mine own land, and that thou shouldst love and wed some youth of thy own, for my heart is yonder with another."

I paused to look—in the depths of her shadowy eyes the cloud storms began to gather and darken, and in their cloud fringes the lightnings leaped in and out, and I saw her hand steal down and rest over the handle of the dagger under her Jewish robe, and I felt there was danger still in this haunted valley, for the soul of the maiden was wrought up to mighty deeds, and in her eyes there shone an unwonted light.

"Joseph bar Elim," she said, and her voice was hoarse with subdued passion, "you have broken bread and have eaten salt at our table, so you are safe while a guest, but hear me while I speak, you shall never clasp to your heart yon lily maiden at the marriage altar, while Martha, the daughter of Ezra, is among the living—farewell."

Proud as Eblis is pictured by the Rabbis, she turned from my side, and as she went up the little path toward the house, she sang, or seemed to sing the song of Miriam at the overthrow of the hosts of Pharaoh in the waves of the sea. I felt that some

great danger was over us, and we must get us hence ere the hour of its fall.

When we were ready to leave, we sought for Martha, but she was nowhere to be found, so leaving our farewell blessing, I and the risen Ada passed out into the gathering shadows.

I saw above the field of blue,
O'er heaven's arch so wondrous bright,
Boetes lead his hunting dogs
In leashes of siderial light.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE WITCH HILKAH.

The moon hung over the western hill, splintering the mountain crags with silvery beauty, pouring down into the valley below, touching the river and temple and tower with a rare old loveliness. Above us, as we journeyed along, we noted the stars —not one missing there in that glorious sky. There was the missing sister in the Pleiades; there the bands of Orion; and there Sirius and Aldebaran shone on with their old-time splendor; and the risen Ada as she walked by my side, like a trusting child, looked up and called them by their names in the olden Hebrew, called them her brothers and sisters.

"And there," said she, pointing to the Star of Bethlehem, "is

the Star shining once more, brightly as on that olden day, when Joshua, the son of Nun, crossed the fords of the Jordon, and pitched his tent against the fallen sun. When my father comes home from the Ammonitish war, and the nightingale, unscared, once more shall sing to his love in the rose-tree under my window, then wilt thou come and sit with me, and together we will tell our love to those sweet, far stars—will we not, Joseph bar Elim?"

"Yes," said I, "surely I will come," although in my heart there had grown a distrust that our love should endure unharmed through the changing scenes which I knew were before us. It was too sweet to be true; too beautiful to endure. And then we passed on under the stars tangled in the silken web of the sky.

We chose the path which I had traveled that first morning when I entered the valley, and the workman had left his chisel, and journeyed a little way with me. We avoided the thoroughfares as much as possible, and hoped to pass through the city unnoticed, and try and escape through the tombs and make our way back to the world without, if time lasted, and heaven decreed.

As we had nearly passed the temple where I first saw the Wandering Jew, we noticed an old woman crouching by the way, and rising, she came up to us and muttered something shrilly through her toothless jaws, meanwhile holding her torch before her hideous face.

"Woman what wouldst thou?" said I, while the risen Ada clung the more closely to my side.

"Well, well," said the crone with a hysterical giggle, "two young folks taking a love stroll! La, la, what a riddle to read the future of such young lives; the stars are big with portent, and fate holds much to disclose; birth, life, death, love, hate revenge, ha ha!

doesn't the witch Hilkah know it all?" And the withered hag chuckled and grinned in the flickering light of the torch she held.

"Let us pass on. It ill becomes us to hold converse with a daughter of Belial," said the risen Ada.

"Ha, ha, thou moonstone," said the witch, "Samuel came forth at the call of the witch of Endor, whose descendant I am, and read her riddle. There is that in thy face which should be told.

"Ada," said I, "let us turn aside, and time will be safer later on to go where we wish."

"I like her not," said the maiden. "She has the evil eye, but I shall go wherever you lead, asking you only, to remember me as a virgin of Israel."

"Lead on," said I to the witch, and grunting, she trotted along, and led on toward a cave in the side of the hill, where she entered, we following close at her heels, for I was minded to slay her, if she dealt treacherously with us.

The cave we entered was some five paces in width, and led directly into the side of the hill. After we had followed the witch for quite a distance, she turned and said: "La, la, now children give your old auntie her pay—and see to it that it be with liberal hand—as the chickens of fortune come home to roost."

I gave her a few pieces of coin—thinking as I gave it, "Jew, indeed, thou art." Then the old woman placed her mouth against a crevice in the side of the cave, whispered some words of pretended divination, and thus began: "Thy name is Joseph bar Elim, thou wert born on the 11th Hesvan, in the year 5618. Thou art loved, but love not in return. Thou love, and art loved—thy life is in danger—but thou shalt not be permitted to die as other men—ha, ha, is it enough," said the withered hag?

"No," said I, hoarsely, "tell me shall I be blest with the one I love?"

The old hag listened once again, whispered some words into the niche, and I caught a whispered voice, so like the maiden Martha's, "No—"

"Woman thou liest," said I in my fierceness.

The witch gave a low whistle, and instantly strong arms were around me and bore me down, and rude hands clutched at my throat, and stifled my voice. Great cords were bound tightly about my limbs, by men in whose hands I was but a child, and the risen Ada was forced from my sight, though she struggled in vain to reach my side. I knew not what treachery was meant but even as I thought, Martha stood beside the witch and her face bore a triumphant look, such as it had when she turned from my side that very day at the spring, when she sang the song of Miriam.

"Joseph bar Elim," said she, "ere the sun is risen thou must put away forever this moon-stone Ada, this pink and pearl Jewish creation, or die!"

"Then," said I, doggedly, "I die."

"So be it," said the Jewess. "Thy lily love will be waiting at the gates, as she dies at midnight, and will be two watches before thee on the road to Sheol. Slave, cast him into the dungeon."

A brawny slave picked me up from the ground, and dragging me away, threw me into a cell in one of the passages, and locking the door with triple chains, went whistling away. Long I lay and pondered. Twice now had I been cast into dungeons in this haunted land, where all to me was so vague and unreal. And now indeed, it was nearing the end. Martha, who saved me once

when self, and Jacob, the son of Aram, had failed, was now the one who compassed my destruction and who wrought my doom. Death to me had no horror, or dread, so it might only be by the side of the divine Ada. Through the silent hours I waited, though the ropes bit into my flesh with merciless teeth. Without I could hear feet hurrying to and fro in the witch's cave. At last I heard the loosening of chains at my prison door, and some one entered, though I was bound so I could not see who it might be. I guessed it was a slave approaching to slay me unseen, and I cried aloud: "Coward, come before me; my heart is strong enough for any fate," but for a long time there was silence, though I felt some presence bending over me and awe began to fill my soul at the lengthened suspense. If death must come, I prayed that it come quickly, and end the dread, with which the silence and suspense were fraught. At last I cried once more: "Spirit, or man, which e'er thou art, stand before me." And then before me Martha stepped forth, threw back her Hebrew veil and stood revealed in the light of the taper she bore.

Her face was pale and drawn with the great weight upon her soul, and the awful events she had hurried upon us. Long she stood there in silence and looked upon me, with no sound in the prison cell except our own stifled breathing. At last she spoke and her voice seemed as the voice of an old woman, and her features seemed drawn and pinched—even as they seemed that morning at the temple of Baal: "Joseph bar Elim, dost know me?"

"Know you?" answered I, "Surely I now know you for the first time,"

"Joseph, thou son of Elim," she continued, "indeed thou judgest me wrongly—I love thee as no other woman on earth hath loved or ever can love, though the days of thy life were lengthened till the eternal hills should crumble with age."

"Martha," said I, "you are to me indeed the evil spirit of my life—saving me at the altar of Baal from a swift, sure death, to sit like a bird of evil omen above my couch and make hideous my

last, and dying moments, go from me I pray you, and exult no more at my downfall."

"Look into my face," said the maiden, "and say if the light of my youth is not gone—care lurks in the wrinkles of my cheek, where joy once sported in the dimpling hollows. Indeed I may love but once. Such love as mine cannot be forgotten, except in the quiet of the grave, where no fever of unrest ever may come. Other lands there are, as you tell me, beyond these mountain heights, take me, I pray you, and together we will dwell, where never the sound of war nor discord shall scare the brooding stock dove from her nest above our door—speak, Joseph bar Elim, for the heart of her who would die for you, aye, come at your call through the pit of Sheol, is nigh to break, and I pray you, scorn not her love."

"Martha," I replied, "it is useless. I may not put guiding hand on the winds of destiny—they blow where they list."

"It is written," said the maiden, "As ye sow, so shall ye reap," but what then shall the guerdon of her be, who went down into the jaws of death for love? Of old the daughter of Jephthah yielded her life as a sacrifice for her country. Jael, the wife of Heber, the Kenite, smote the nail into the temples of Sisera, and Judith, for love of Israel, went down to the camp of the Assyrians, toyed with the locks of Holofernes, smote off his head and bore it within the gates, and have they not each her reward? But Martha, the child of an unknown widow, is nameless in the land, and forgotten so soon in the tent of him she delivered!"

"Nay, Martha," I answered, "not forgotten, but my heart is wedded to another with links more strong than fetters of earth, and may not be broken this side the grave—thy love to me is a fearful thing."

I looked into her eyes and I read therein something more terrible than rage. It seemed more dreadful than a basilisk's eye as

she drew up her form to its fullest height, and lifting her hand she swore an oath, so awful that even the damned in Sheol that night looked up in terror, and which on the day of compt may outweigh all the good of her life! Then stooping, she kissed me on the lips and saying: "The reaper shall be reaped and the slayer be slain—at the resurrection may my love stand up and witness against thee, ere judgment be spoken twixt thee and me—till then, farewell." And then she passed out and fastened the prison door behind.

Then desperation fell on me, for in the eyes of the maiden I saw an insane light, and I knew that reason had fled from the throne of her mind, and her heart was wrought up to desperate things. I wrenched at the cords which bound me, but all in vain. Great sweat drops broke forth on my forehead, for even then I heard a cock crow the midnight hour in the valley below, and the knowledge that the risen Ada even then was about to die was upon me, and madness stirred in my veins. I cursed and cried and prayed, and I fancied I heard my name faintly spoken in the distance by the voice of the risen Ada. Then I lifted my manacled hands and prayed: "Spirits of the divine King Solomon, which of old were wont to come at his bidding, I bid you in the name of Him, Elohim, Schem hammporrasch, Name Incommunicable, unloose my bonds!"

And then unseen hands tore loose my fastenings and I leaped on the floor of my prison, fetterless and free!

"Open, door of my prison," cried I, tearing the Great King's seal from my bosom and clutching it with fierce swift hands.

The great door stood back on its hinges, and I rushed through the corridor calling the name of Ada.

At the farther end of a corridor which led off at a right angle from my prison house, I saw a throng of black-browed ruffians and heard the voice of the risen Ada calling my name. Into their midst like a demon I rushed—about the maiden their

lances shone in close banked lines, as she stood erect with lip curved in with fear, and hands outstretched to ward them off. Upon their spear points I rushed, holding the great king's seal aloft, from which vivid lightnings broke and splintered on spear and helm, and calling, crying the awful name: "Elohim, Schem hammporrasch," I seized their spears in my naked arms and brake them, as a lion breaks the bramble, so that the men stood still with outstretched, empty hands, while the old witch, holding a lighted fagot, her toothless jaws wagging from side to side, stood near them amazed. Up to the side of the risen Ada I sprang, then turned to look, but the slaves still stood with outstretched, empty hands, and looking more closely, lo as they stood they had died! Then the old hag shrieked and fled so swiftly that her fagot went out, and darkness and silence were around and upon the risen Ada and myself, and the dead men standing there with outstretched, empty hands.

Then we turned to leave the evil place, but the dead men hemmed us in, and we could not pass out from their horrid circle. With all a Jew's horror of the dead, I went up to the nearest, and pushing him, he fell outward upon the floor and lo his body had changed to stone, and the fall sounded as a falling rock! We passed out through the opening where the man had stood, and a strange fancy came upon me, and I lifted the dead man up and stood him once more on his feet, with his companions, still holding out their empty, stony hands. And there they will stand with outstretched, empty hands, till the day of doom!

We turned and left the cave, seeing no trace of the witch, Hilkah, nor Martha, and quickly passed out into the clear, calm night.

Then said Ada: "How beautiful and calm the stars shine on, so unlike this fretful and wicked world."

Ah! truly; beautiful the night seemed over and around us leaning as a fond mother leans above the form of her sleeping

child! Oh rare magnetic night! Night of south winds! blow balmy rest to the wearied soul and kiss tired eyelids down with gentle sleep, but know that all thy charms are naught to the joy of young heart linked to heart in the first, best boon of earth, oh rare, sweet love!

Ah had I only known, had I only known the wonderful power of the great king's seal, I had bid the jinns bring down the mystic carpet of the Magi Solomon and bear us out from that haunted valley, under the shadowy wings of the great king's flying birds, and together we had lived through the years in some far land in the bliss of love, while earth ran on in its giddy waltz! But I knew not the power of the Talisman and there came no spirit to whisper wisdom in my ears. Only the faint, far recollection of an old, old song, which my mother sang in the sound of the misty Baltic in farther Pommerania, was all I had ever heard of the great king's seal, and I had not then read what the Rabbis told of the wonders the great King Solomon worked with this mystic Talisman.

Ah well, it is past and may not be changed. Above us the Star of Bethlehem shone faint and far, and it seemed to me with lessening glory. But deeming the coming of the Christ as nothing to my love for the risen Ada, I directed our footsteps toward the cave of the Prophets, climbed up its causeway in the gray of the morning, entered the tomb, and in one of the many pasages we rested, seeking a time to secretly withdraw from the cavern and pass down the cliff over the river, and make good our escape back to the world I knew and loved.

All that day we talked of love, and how in the world beyond those mountains we would fashion a home, over whose door the jasmine should climb and where never the sun should glance on spear, or helm, for the maiden still thought of Judea, and the centuries fled were to her but as the watches in a night. All

memory of the meeting with Jephthah, her father, had vanished, and once more she seemed to live as though the centuries had never been, as though that rash vow of her warrior father had never been uttered and the hills of Judea had never echoed with the tread of returning hosts. The broken thread of life had been taken up, the nightmare of sacrifice and death forgotten, and once more she trod the hills of her native land, plucking the rose of Sharon and the sweet-smelling Narcissus on the heights of Carmel. I could not find it in my heart to tell her otherwise. I dared not break the sweetness of her present peace with reminder of those sad, last hours, ere she offered herself to the knife of sacrifice, the most precious gift ever laid on the altar of her country. And so through the day we talked on and on as lovers have done and will ever do.

'Tis Well.

Whether we go in the dust and the noise
Of the storm of the battle which shaketh the world;
Whether we go in the autumn of peace,
When the harvests are yellow where flags were unfurled,
So the bugle of truce sounds a peace with our God,
'tis well.

Whether the civic wreath laurels our brow,
Or beggared and blind we sit by the gate;
Whether we dwell in the huts of the poor,
Or in marble and gold of lofty estate,
So the bugle of truce sounds a peace with our God,
'tis well.

Whether the measure is empty or full,
When God leaning out from his cloud hath but spoke;
Whether we lie with the poor or the great,
When morning eternal above us hath broke,
So the bugle of truce sounds a peace with our God,
'tis well.

CHAPTER XIV.

MARTHA ON THE ALTAR OF ASHTAROTH.

And now let me return to the temple of Baal. When the feast of the sacrifice was ended and the last paean note had died away, the multitude slowly disappeared from before the altar and went about their labors, for had they not sacrificed a human being on the altar of Baal and offered their orisons and had not Mesheck, the priest, announced the turning of the sun and the lessening of his shadow on the dial plate? So they knew that the winter should end and the summer once more clothe their barren fields with the golden grain. Thus the sacrifice at the winter solstice was ended. Then the dark-browed priest sealed the altar and sprinkled a circle of blood about it, that no dealer in magic might enter the circle, nor approach the altar on which yet lay the smoking heart; then he left the temple, and only the guard at the gate remained.

The day wore on, and night came, and another day and no trace of Mesheck, the priest, was seen. The fire remained unkindled on his altar since the night after the sacrifice, while ever

there in the temple of Ashtaroth, fire gleamed on the altar while all night long was heard the cry:

"Ishtar! Bringer of good things!
Star of the evening hail!"

So the priests of the lower temples took counsel and searched the chamber of Mesheck, finding his mantle, but no other trace. Then search was made throughout the temple in every chamber and hall, even in the dungeon where rested the dead man upright against the wall; and the undergound galleries were examined, and the pit beneath the altar, but the dead priest above them on the shelf, said never a word. Then the excitement grew the more intense. Had the man who passed out through the hallway in the early morn, when the watchman cried to the man at the gate, returned next night and slain the priest, Mesheck, and hid him away? The guard at the gate who cried when Ahasuerus passed unseen down the hall. had been excuted next morn, as was the custom of the Jews when a man had allowed a prisoner to escape, so he had not seen Mesheck as he descended from the altar that night to visit me in the chamber below.

Then the sooth-sayers and dealers in magic were called, and around and around the altar they ran like blood-hounds searching a trail. It was this commotion I heard at the temple of Baal that day in the early morn as I stood at the mouth of the tomb with the risen Ada. Then they sent for the seer Merak, who was famed for divination by use of arrows, but though he muttered his incantations and invoked his spells it availed him nothing. Meanwhile the day had come and a sorceror called Rhodomathus, famed throughout the valley for his great skill in divination by the entrails of animals, was sent for, and he slew a lamb at the altar, and ere it died, he dragged from its side its quivering entrails, and over them muttered his spells, but he, like the first, could tell them nothing of the fate of the dead priest, Mesheck. Then they sent for a witch who dwelt in the rocks on

the further side of the valley, who was read in the mystic lore—It was Hilkah, the same old hag who had enticed myself and the risen Ada the night before into her witch cave in the hills The old hag came and brought with her her divining rod of the witch hazel. Into her withered old hands were thrust some pieces of silver, and the hag muttering: "La, la," in joy at the sight of the money, approached the altar holding in her hands the divining rod and thrice around the altar the withered crone trotted, then approaching the altar, the witch hazel turned in her hands, and she answered that the dead priest lay below.

With wild hands they tore up the altar stone and lo on the shelf beneath, Mesheck, the dead priest, with his bosom torn and his heart riven therefrom! Then each looked into the other's eyes and read therein some great treachery. they knew not what, but this they knew that it was not Mesheck who had served that morning at the altar. Who could it be? Since the days of their fathers, no such thing had been, and whoever had slain the priest, should he not at least die the death?

Then they lifted the old priest up from the shelf and placed him on the altar, (his breast torn just as mine would have been!) and over him wailed and lifted their hands. Then the withered crone was called once more, and for a few more pieces of money (Ah what will a Jew not do for money!) agreed to search out the murderer, knowing full well where she lived who had done the deed.

"Go on," said the other priest. "Let us find him, that he may die," said the man of the lion-build, who had struck me down that day before the temple.

Then once more the old witch took up the divining rod and standing above the dead priest in order to bring herself en rapport with the slayer, her toothless jaws wagging as the rod would swerve to this side, or that, she started out on the trail. Slowly

at first, because of the crossing of so many feet, the old hag crept along, out down the hallway, into the gallery, the great crowd following, then on into the pit, where Martha threw off the mantle of the dead priest and discovered herself to me as my savior; then through the long galleries, and up through the chamber of Mesheck, and into the street, where Martha and I had travelled, and then the witch journeyed faster, trotting along, and swerving this way or that, as the rod indicated, moving straight forward on our trail, with the great crowd still following, till she reached the house of the widow, and entering the door, the rod turned once more, indicating the maiden Martha as the murderess.

"Tis she," mumbled the toothless hag, and straightway the soldiers seized the Jewish maid and bound her and dragged her away to the judgment hall of the Sanhedrim, where the rulers sat in their solemn circle.

It was then mid-day. When they led the maiden before the rulers and she was asked of her guilt, she looked out over the sea of faces before her in the judgment hall, as though in search of some one she could not find; looked up towards the Star of Bethlehem, grown faint in the heavens, then said with a clear, calm voice: "I am guilty."

Then from the throat of the assembled multitude there burst a roar of rage and revenge. At once the soldiers banked their spears more closely together, to shut back the pressing mob. Then silence fell once more and one of the rulers questioned her why she slew the priest Mesheck. Drawing herself up to her fullest height, she calmly answered: "I did it because of my love for the prisoner."

For a moment some turned aside, and no one spoke. Then came the order of the Judges, sitting there in solemn circle, that she die as a sacrifice on the altar of Ashtaroth. Then the guards led her forth.

Near where the river issues from under the mountains and close by the cave of the Prophets is the temple of Ashtaroth. Beside it is the temple of Baal, and beyond that, to the right as you front the mountains, is the temple of Javeh, or the Lord of Hosts, where on that first morning the Wandering Jew and myself talked with the priest at the altar. All stand at a nearly equal distance from the mouth of the cave and scarcely more than a bow-shot therefrom. The sun was shining clear and beautiful that winter day. It was the 25th day of the month Kislev, known as December, in the year of the world 5651, known to Christians as 1890. No cloud was scudding across the sky. It seemed indeed as though the peace which was known aforetime at the birth of the Messiah had come again, prophetic indeed of the coming of the Lord and the day of Judgment. But no peace was there in that hill-locked valley—the soul of the people was astir. The Hebrew followers who looked for the Christ, coming in the pomp and glory of the kingdom of God, were filled with awe, for the star of His portent was growing dimmer and dimmer in the heavens above. No peace was there in the temple of Baal, —was not the High Priest Mesheck himself lying slain on the altar of sacrifice?—while there at the temple of Ashtaroth were hurrying feet, preparing for the sacrifice at the setting of sun.

Slowly the afternoon hours wore on. In the desolate home of the widow, the mother of Martha, sat with her face in her withered hands, asking of Him the fate of her child, but only the far-off echo was heard of the voices of lamentation at the temple of Baal.

When the evening had come, they led the maiden forth to die! The red sun set behind the western hills and his last rays touched both minaret and tower and shone on the upturned face of her who was waiting to die. As the priest led on before—it was Rhamus, the priest at the altar of Ashtaroth—his grey beard sweeping below his girdle, the eyes of the maiden looked out

over the faces of the mighty crowd gathering to witness the sacrifice, and in those eyes there seemed a wistfulness, as though searching for some one they could not find. Up to the steps of the altar the gray priest led on—the Urim and Thummim on his breast, glittering with the stones of firelight and perfection, and engraven on their gems, the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. Behind were the black-browed soldiers with weapons in hand. Thrice around the altar they marched, the gray priest chanting a paean to Ashtaroth, worshipped aforetime as Venus, the goddess of love in the temples of Greece and Rome, but above the paean of the priest could be heard the voice of the maiden singing the hymns of Jehovah, untouched by the terrors of the hour, and triumphant even in death. Then she mounted the altar of sacrifice —no fear on that marble brow, no tremor of foot or of hand. And now the multitude caught up the hymn and sang:

"Ishtar, bringer of good things!
Star of the evening, hail!"

Then the soul of the Jewish maiden rose up in the hour of her death, flamed grandly as the soul of her Nation is wont, and over the noise of their paean, hushing it to silence, the song of the prophetess Deborah burst from her lips:

"Praise ye the Lord, for the avenging of Israel,
When the people willingly offered themselves!
Awake, awake Deborah, awake and utter a song!
They fought from heaven!
The stars in their courses fought against Sisera!
Blessed above woman shall Jael
The wife of Heber, the Kenite, be,
Blessed shall she be above woman in her tent!
She put her hand to the nail,
And her right hand to the workman's hammer,
And with the hammer she smote Sisera!
At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down,
At her feet he bowed, he fell,
Where he bowed, he fell down dead!"

And so triumphantly passed on and out the greatest soul which ever was housed in the dust of Israel.

Moonbeams that kneel at the casement,
  Like white-hooded Nuns at their prayer.
Thus linger our joys for a moment
  Then vanish and fade into air.
Fade into air while uplifted
  Our arms reach out to embrace
The dreams and ambition of manhood,
  The guerdon at end of the race.

CHAPTER XV.

DEATH OF THE WITCH HILKAH.

All this time I and the risen Ada were together in the distant chamber of the tomb of the Prophets, rehearsing the old, old story of love, but in mine ears a death bell rang, and over my soul there fell a presentiment of some great evil without, so leaving the risen Ada I rushed to the mouth of the cave to hear the echo of the last word of that song ringing across the gathering night, and to see Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew, mounting the rocks, where Zerib bar Elia stood watching the valley below. And then clear and strong rose the cry of the multitude approaching the causeway where we stood, brandishing their spears in the shaken lights. And on toward the cave, the witch Hilkah, with the divining rod in her hands, leading the multitude, baying like hounds on our track.

I felt at once the danger which was hovering o'er us, and even while I stood and trembled with awe, I could not help but notice

the multitude of torches, for they were even as a field of waving corn, and I thought of the words of Isaiah: "Terrible as an army with banners." On, up to the mouth of the cavern they swept, a multitude stretching far out into the shadows of the night, their wild cries filling the heavens with fear, so that the stars looked scared.

"Come on," said the Prophet Elijah, "blasphemers of the Lord of Hosts, come on." And there in the night his presence seemed awful as he towered up over the causeway which led to the tomb, his hands uplifted and his beard and hair sweeping out on the winds. Up the side of the mountain they poured on and on, an endless throng, with cries of revenge. Then out from the cavern's mouth reached down long tongues of flame and swathed and folded them round, licking them up like stubble! Still on and on they poured, and in that awful hour I thought the Judgment had come. Above them in the night stood the form of the Prophet, his long hair loosened to the winds, and above all the noise of the tumult, his voice rose shrill and clear, singing Hosannas to the God of Israel! Up from their charred bodies below, as though their quitting souls, serpents of flame would rise, and climbing high as the man had stood, would turn, then lick red-forked tongue and die! Then fear seized the multitude and shrieking they fled, leaving their smouldering dead as they lay, while over them swept the triumphant song of Zerib bar Elia, singing the old war songs of Israel!

After Many Years.

Love's linger but a day and pass,
As travelers on some desert wide
Speak, linger for an hour, then go
Their way, and ne'er return again
Above the low rim of the plain.

I throw a kiss across the miles
To one whose face within my soul
Is niched in olden memories sweet,
Though years have built a wall so high
Betwixt our lives we may not meet.

I look up to the silent skies
Where Sirius and Arcturus shine
In their old wonted glory, fair
As on that far creation's dawn,
I turn and lo your feet are gone!

CHAPTER XVI.

THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM RECEDES.

As Elijah stood there in that rocky causeway, I thought of the days of old when at the command of Ahaziah, king in the land of Moab, the soldiers by fifties were sent to bring him down from the crags a captive, and the fire came down and consumed the captains and their fifties. Not for a lease of unending life would I dared have spoken as he stood there grand and terrible, so like a god in that awful hour. At last when his spirits were composed, Ahasuerus spake, and his voice sounded broken and strange, and it seemed to me piping as an old, old man: "Father," said he, addressing the seer, "The Star waneth!" Look above; is it mist in the night, or doth the Star of Bethlehem recede? Look, I pray you, for my heart is heavy with fear."

Then Zerib bar Elia gazed long at the star, and answered: "My son, the star surely wanes."

"Then," said the Wandering Jew, "some great sin hath been done—and may vengeance come down—worse, aye, even worse—on his head than the fate of those minions of Baal, the smoke of whose burning comes up from below!"

At this speech from the two old men, I hastily withdrew into a cavity of the wall, and the two old men passed by me, slill earnestly talking of the Star, and the sin which some one had done.

At a little distance they once more paused, and I heard Ahasuerus saying: "Dost think, father, that the absent Joseph bar Elim hath wrought us a sin?"

"Son," said the Prophet, "my mind goes back to the hour when Joseph bar Elim and myself stood in the tomb of the Prophets, and I marked him pausing longer at the ashes of my country woman, Ada, daughter of Jephthah, than at any other tomb—Could it be that his hands have despoiled the sanctuary of the dead and profaned the sacred tomb of the Prophets?"

"Father," said the Wandering Jew, "of old a priest brake into the holy of holies and ate the shew bread from the altar. In the later books it is written: "Perchance ye may entertain angels unaware," so may it not be that perchance we have warmed a serpent in our bosom?"

Then my heart grew faint with the knowledge of the sin I had done, and with fluttering veins I sought to find a way of escape. Down in the valley there was death lying in wait; out through the cave there was no avenue of escape, as the Prophet and Ahasuerus stood in the way. Down the cavern the old men passed on till they came to the chamber of the dead, and Zerib bar Elia bidding the Wandering Jew remain without, passed in to examine the dead. In a few moments he returned and in the light of his flickering lamp his face seemed awful, and hoarsely he wailed in the echoing corridor: "Lost, lost, lost!"

I have seen a mother stand by the death bed of her only child; I have seen a father broken and bowed at the grave of his last tie on earth, but not till the end of doom shall my soul forget the awful agony of the Wandering Jew when he learned of the sin and knew that again he must take up the burden of life and live on and on through the sunless years with the curse of divine anathema upon him. His face grew grey and ashey with despair and old age came upon him as it were swift soon. It were sacri-

lege even to tell the awfulness of that hour of despair, when the ho pe of his nineteen centuries was shattered, and so let me hasten to the end, for the shadows about us seem weird and strange.

Through the long corridor and galleries they sought, and when I divined their purpose, I went straight up to Zerib bar Elia and spake: "Father, he whom ye seek is here." I expected to die. The breast of the old man heaved with madness, but at last he spoke and his voice was shrill as the wind:

"Miserable man, I may not slay you, but may the God who hath made you deal mercifully with you—into other hands than mine shall your body be committed—pass on."

The old man followed me down towards the mouth of the cave which overlooked the valley, then touching some hidden spring in the wall of the cavern, a door swung open and he bade me enter. I obeyed, and with no word as to my fate, the door swung to and the Prophet was gone. In the darkness and gloom of my prison I could not tell what hour of the watch it might be. Over my door there was a small, square opening through which air entered the dungeon, other than that there was no opening left to the corridor without. I was not far from the mouth of the cave, that I knew, for once in the night I heard the wailing of the Prophet and the Wandering Jew at the cavern's mouth, and the weight of my awful sin bore down on my soul, and seemed almost too heavy to bear. Down there in the valley while I was communing with love—Martha, the Jewess, was shedding her blood for me! Had I only known, ah had I only known! And yet single-handed—one to a thousand—what might it availed? Only another victim on the altar of Baal; another heart flung beside that of the dead priest Mesheck! And then I thought again of the risen Ada, where was she now? Did she still sit in the shadow of the outer chamber of the cavern waiting my return with longing eyes,

or had the Prophet and the Wandering Jew already discovered her?—Surely they would do her no harm. But even then I heard her low voice saying to the men: "Nay, nay, be not so rude with me, I will go where you bid."

Then I rushed to my prison door and called: "Ada, my love!" She answered: "Joseph bar Elim, I hear."

Then I cried once more: "Be brave, thou daughter of Jephthah. If they harm so much as one hair of thy head, high heaven shall fall!"

And then she was borne along and I beat at the door and cried in vain.

And then came the memory of the Great King's seal, and I tore it from my bosom with wild, swift hands, but even as I reached it forth and lifted my voice to pray, it slipped from my hand and bounded away in the darkness and a mocking demon laughed long and loud in the shadows of the the cell. Vainly I stretched out my eager, unsteady hands, for the call of the risen Ada had left a madness in my mind and I cursed and prayed and laughed, till even the demon grew frightened and shrieked and fled.

That night in the dungeon of the temple of Baal, that night with the dead, whom I touched on the face, was a joy when compared with the last night I spent in the tomb of the Prophets. Where was the risen Ada, and could it be that these men of God would harm her? And then I lifted my palsied hands and swore: "Better to die thou gray-haired Prophet, better be torn limb from limb and strewn on the altar of Baal than that one hair of the risen Ada should come to harm!"

All night long I groped in the darkness, and pushed it from my face, or beat at the strong-barred gate and called. It was surely nearing the morning and in the growing light perhaps I might

find the lost Seal and then my prison door should ope—and then and then—well I could die for her. To me it had seemed an age since the door had closed on my steps, since the risen Ada had answered "Joseph bar Elim, I hear."

At last the gray light of the morning crept over the far-off hills, crept up the causeway which led to the tomb and shone on the ashes of the priests of Baal, shone on the pillars which roofed in the cave, and stole through the narrow window above my door, lighting the gloom of the cavern with the gray of the dawning. Down in the valley I fancied I could hear noises astir, and as I listened more closely, I could hear the cry from the Hebrew altar:

"Star of the coming Christ, all hail!
The sacrifice lies on the altar,
Oh Star of the Christ, return!"

And then a wild thought struck along my brain, "God are they about to murder the risen Ada?"

At the fastenings of my prison door with wild strong hands I tore; I beat upon the stony walls, I cursed and cried, and then the sunlight shone over and in through my window, and lo it fell on the glittering stone of the great king's seal and swifter than a second ray of light, I seized it, and holding it aloft once more, I cried out with awful voice: "Open, door of my prison—In the name of the divine One, Elohim, Schem hamm-porrasch, I bid you open!"

Then swung the great door ajar, and with wild, swift feet I flew to the cavern's mouth. There at the temple of Jehovah a great crowd knelt in the early morn with bowed heads bared.

Above on the altar stood the risen Ada in her mantle of white, and beside her the Hebrew priest with a knife upraised, waiting the end of the song to slay. Once more I lifted the great king's seal and cried: "Spirits immortal, in the name of the divine One, Schem hammporrasch, arise at my call!"

Then around and about me ten thousand spirits crowded ready to do the bidding of him who held the great king's seal, but I knew not the command to give. I knew I could not reach her side in time to save. I saw her lift and stretch her hands toward me, for I had stood one moment at the mouth of the cave, then the song died out, and a madness fell upon me and I rushed to the chamber which held the hidden Ark of the Covenant, threw wide its doors, sprang up to the Holy of Holies, under the great, wide mercy seat, under the kneeling cherubim, laid hold of the horns of the Ark itself and cried with awful voice: "Elohim, Schem hammporrasch, let fall thy dreaded curse!"

Then rocked the mountain, then shrieked the dead, the curtain of the tabernacle was rent in twain; great shapes of fear went shrilling past, and I felt that the end was come. From my maniac grasp the great king's seal was torn by unseen hands and out from that awful presence, living, yet blinded by the flaming cherubim, I staggered down into the valley. Before me the multitude still sat with hands held up in unfinished prayer. The priest at the altar, still hesitated with arm upraised to strike. With one great bound I sprang to his side and struck, struck swift and strong, but his arm still stood suspended in air. Amazed I turned to look and lo before me he stood—a statue of stone! And then I gazed into the face of the risen Ada, who still held up her outstretched arms, and I read therein unutterable change. On her face there shone a rapture of joy, for she still knew me.

but even as I gazed and called her name, a change crept over her features, such as the lotus lily knows at the setting of sun. The luster which fills the eyes of the dying, now shone therein, and with the smile still lighting, her radiant face, she changed as the statue of Pygmalion changed, to enduring marble! And then I clung to her side and kissed her with passionate love, but even as my lips pressed hers the chill of death passed over them and their warmth died out, even as I called and cried; but she could not return from the shores of doom. And then I turned to look, and the priest with his upraised knife; the kneeling thousands and their unfinished prayer, all were frozen in marble fear!

For a moment I stood, then over to the temple of Ashtaroth I sped, and there the dead Martha lay on the altar—a marble sacrifice. Under her girdle, as though thrust hastily there, and folded about the handle of the dagger, with which she had slain the priest Mesheck, was a parchment, and on it in Hebrew writing directed to me, were the words which told of her last hours on earth—and then there were other words also, which to you perhaps would be trivial, so I will hold them close locked in my heart unspoken.

Then down to the house of the widow I hastened, and there she sat with her face in her hands. I came up and touched her, and she too was marble. Everywhere, frozen with fear, the people were just as they chanced to be when the great wrath fell. Here a mother was bending to waken her marble child with a morning kiss; there the tradesman stood, observing his marble balance—the river no longer ran, but stood still in tumultuous stone! A fountain uplifted its waters, falling yet never to fall. Two gray hawks hovering and screaming above the temples of Ashtaroth and Baal, the only living things in all this marble desolation.

Then I drew nigh to the spring where on the first morning the maidens were drawing water. A camel was kneeling there with head stretched out toward the sparkling water, and the beast showed signs of great fatigue. Seated upon its back, and leaning forward as though just about to dismount, were a man and a maid—I came up and lo it was Jacob, the son of Aram, and the maiden Rachel, and on her face there was a look of peace and I saw she was the same Hebrew maiden who had brought water and bid me drink, that first morning of all. And before me the spring, the wearied camel, Jacob and his Rachel were stone. I reached up and took the revolver from his belt, and lo one chamber was empty! So placing it back in its sheath at his girdle, I once more gave him the masonic signal, and expecting no response, I passed on, leaving them there with that look of sweet satisfaction on their faces which can never more change till time is run down and the hills outworn.

Then down to the temple of Baal I hastened, and there on the altar the body of Mesheck still lay, and out from his riven breast, a great snake reared and lifted its hissing head—it too changed into stone.

Then I passed down into the dungeon and once more touched the dead man on his marble face—he still stood upright against the wall. Then leaving the temple, I looked above, and saw one of the gray hawks far over the western heights and the other gray hawk in level flight toward the morning sun, and I knew then that they were the spirits of Ashtaroth and Baal, quitting the earth forever—one bound for the Evening Star; the other for the morning sun! Then straightway the desolation and the fear of the awful place fell on me, and I fled from the valley on the wings of the wind.

Oh past! Oh dark and sunless years that lie,
A mighty burial shroud o'er comrades dead!
Oh still and vanished years, forever fled;
Oh lonesome days that give no answering cry!

The damps of death are hovering o'er the face
Of him whose bones lie straightened in the grave;
All dark and windowless forever, save
The glory of the resurrection's grace.

A traveller to some far Mecca bourn,
Grown weary with the march and noon-day glare,
In that dark inn, the grave, so cold and bare,
Rests through the night of death until the morn.

And when the breaking of eternal day
Athwart the gloom shall throw a morning glow,
Clad in new garments, he will rise and go
To Him whose glory lit the darkened way.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE CURSE OF AHASUERUS.

As I mounted the causeway which led to the tomb of the Prophets, I noticed the heaps of whitened ashes, which told where the priests and minions of Baal had perished. In advance of all others, I saw a fallen heap, and lying as though it had been clutched in some ones hands, was a curious shaped line of ashes, as though of a branch or small rod held in the outstretched hands —and I knew at once it was the ashes of the witch Hilkah, who perished as she led on before the multitude. At the mouth of the tomb stood Zerib bar Elia, his hands upraised, his beard and hair floating out on the morning wind, the leathern girdle still binding his loins —and he too changed to stone as he stood. And there he will stand through the ages to come, with stony eyes looking out on the valley below, over the dead Martha on the altar of Ashtaroth, over the serpent on the breast of the slain priest, Mesheek, over the kneeling multitude—over the unfinished prayer, and over the risen Ada with her arms outstretched —all changed to enduring marble. When the priests of Ashtaroth and Baal were slain, the mission of the Prophet was ended, and his soul went hence to its place of rest. I lighted a fagot at

the mouth of the cave and entered the tomb of the Prophets. Wild shapes went hurrying up and down—ghosts gibbered and squeaked; the dead kings stood on their feet, quaked skinny fingers across their streets and shrilled like hollow wind! The great owl hooted and laughed and demons fled back to their places of torment, clashed toothless gums as they passed and wailed. In the darkness I met the Wandering Jew. Into each other's faces we thrust our burning fagots and each read therein the story of doom. His features were awful in the flickering, phantom light. "Joseph bar Elim," he hoarsely cried, "I may not slay you, but live on with these memories in your soul, and when you come to die, the horrors of Sheol will fright you back from the land of doom. Till my wanderings are ended, you shall not die, that I may meet you at compt and once more look in your eyes."

I waited no longer, but turned from his awful presence and fled—out, out to the mouth of the cave, above where the river roared 3000 feet in the canyon below, and sought to leap into the yawning abyss, but out from its steep-down gulf a sword of fire reached up, flashed blinding light and waved me back—so even the boon of death is denied me!

And now I am nearly done! I climbed down that wall and passed on with the memories of that land upon me and the fever of unrest ever in my veins, knowing that my feet must move when the feet of Ahasuerus move, till the Star returns and the Messiah comes to lift the curse from Ahasuerus and Joseph bar Elim, the Wandering Jews—Farewell." And Joseph bar Elim passed out and was gone.

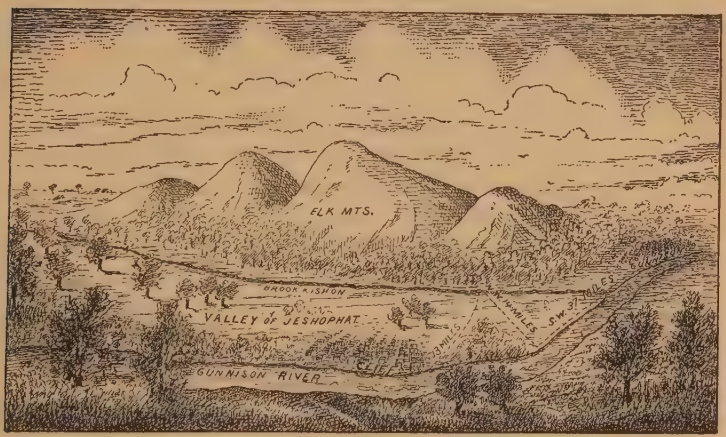
When our ship comes home, when our ship comes home,
Will it be, will it be with wind-kissed sail,
With Hope at the helm and Joy at the prow,
Or a wreck strown wide by the ocean gale,
A hand flung out from the drifting foam,
When our ship comes home? When our ship comes home?

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE PARCHMENT ROLL.

For a long time I sat there, dumb with the strange recollections upon me. My fire had burned low and my lamp, never a very bright one, was now quite burned out, and as it was nearly midnight, I rose to go. But just then I noticed a roll of paper lying beside the chair where the Jew had rested and I picked it up. It was written over with strange characters which I afterward learned to be Hebrew, and on another paper folded within there was a drawing of a road and the representation of a cliff, and a cave in the cliff, with a river far below at the mountain's base. My curiosity was aroused, and I made a trip to the nearest city, the name of which for the present I shall not disclose, and sought out a Hebrew, called Simon Levi, who ran a pawnbroker's shop, and taking him into my confidence, I told him the wonderful story, and showed him the drawing. He listened to my story with marked attention, and examining the writing and drawing said, which I believe to be the truth, that the writing

was in the olden Hebrew in which the Talmud and the Torah are writ, and he would study it out and translate it for me. I have since believed that this same pawn-broker, Simon Levi, misled me. Next day he returned the papers, and the following is an exact copy of the drawing and writing, translated into English as Simon assured me:



It is my firm belief that this Simon Levi kept the original drawing which Joseph bar Elim had dropped and drew another, and different map, which he returned to me. I immediately set out to find the cliff and the opening through the cave, but although I sought for weeks, I could find no trace of it, although the directions were very plain and could not possibly be misunderstood. One thing I have forgotten to mention, which Joseph bar Elim told me that night in the cabin. He said that when he and the daughter of Jephthah were together in the witch's cave, and the old hag, Hilkah, was pretending to divine,

certain rappings were heard which came from within the mountain and which the old hag pretended were answering spirits, but which, as Joseph bar Elim said, he instantly recognized as the steady stroke of a pick-axe far in the depths of the mountain, and which no doubt one day would dig through and discover this wonderful valley.

Shortly after I had shown the drawing to Simon Levi, I noticed that his pawn-shop door was closed and for a long time he was gone, and when he returned he closed out his petty business altogether, and is now building him a princely residence. I shall always believe that the rascally Jew altered the drawing he returned to me so as to mislead, and that following the original, he discovered this wonderful land and its hidden wealth—a Jew is a Jew, that's all I say. But I have a clue which I now feel certain will lead into this wonderful land and discover its mysteries, and before this story finds its way into print I hope to have in my possession the long and countless parchment rolls, on which Elijah, the Tishbite has written the history of Israel for twenty-six centuries, and then farewell to all earthly care in the pleasure I shall have in being the one who shall reveal the secrets of this wonderful land, and who knows but what I may hold in my hand the wonder-working seal of King Solomon and place the world at my feet? I had well-nigh forgotten the parchment which had been found under the girdle of Martha. It was written in olden Hebrew.

The following is the translation of the writing returned with the original, by Simon Levi:

"FROM HER WHO IS WAITING TO DIE, GREETING:—Should the one to whom these lines are written see this, let him know that even in the hour of her death, her thoughts are of him. In the meshes she laid for thee, oh love, her feet were entangled! When a babe in her mother's arms, Hilkah, the witch, was wont to call her sweet names, and taught her to call her mother. Alas! it was only to steal away

her heart and at last to sell her for a palm full of silver, and deliver her, whom she once rocked, over to the destroyer—In the land of Israel on the glitter of gold! In the hour of her death no word of cheer comes through the bars of her prison to lighten her darkened path to the grave. No friend has come—I say no friend—Indeed Hilkah, the old, she who enticed you to the cave when madness stirred in my veins, came but, now and sitting without, pointed her skinny finger through the bars of my prison, and laughing at my doom, tauntingly said: "Ha, ha! thou last of the hated brood of Joseph! Does death smack sweet to thy lips? Do the winds blown up from opened Sheol smell good to thy nostrils, thou child of mine ancient enemy?" And then she chuckled while she clasped her skinny hands about her knees as she rocked to and fro, then suddenly ceasing she shrilled: "Child, dost know why thy life is betrayed? If not, then listen: Thy father was one of the princes of Israel, born of the tribe Joseph, on whom the blessing had rested since the sojourn in Egypt. Once I was young and was fair, ha, ha! Is not that a merry tale? But once no fairer than Hilkah followed in the train of the king. Across yon valley, beyond where Israel cast lots at Shiloh, my early days were spent. Once, when the children of Joseph and the upper land came down to wage war on the Ephraimites, because of rapacious inroads, I saw a young man, beautiful as Gideon in his tent above Esdraelon, lordly as Jephthah and proud as Saul, and he led on at the head of the army. It was Abraham ben Ezra, thy father. I met him and loved him with all the strength of an ardent nature. He seemed to return that affection, and when the war was over and the happy days ended, he bade me good-bye, to lead back his troops and deliver the booty and then he would return and we should be wed. The summer months passed, and he came not. Morning, noon and night, I looked to the north, hoping to see his swift white camel come swinging into sight, but autumn winds browned the acacia and olive, and winter winds housed in their desolate tops, yet he came not!

Spring, summer and winter I waited, and somehow the bloom died out in my cheeks, but he came not! At last I set out on a journey to learn what fate had befallen him, whether quick death in the battle front, or death by slow, wasting disease.

One day in the evening, way-worn and wearied by the long journey on foot, I came where he lived, and lo, under a palm tree I found

him sitting, and beside him a younger and lovelier woman than I! I drew down my Jewish veil and passed on, and with breaking heart I came to the temple of Ashtaroth, and there as a vestal virgin I tarried, to sing the mad paean: "Hail, Hesperus, hail!", to nurse the perpetual fire on the altar, and the still more perpetual fire in my own wild heart. I waited full time, till two children were born, thy brother and thyself, and then I let fall the curse I had spoken! Thinkest thou thy father died at Bethpeor? Thinkest thou his soul went thence into Sheol? Ha, ha! thou cockatrice's young, not thus! Go down into the dungeon of Baal and ask the dead man who stands upright on his feet and hear what he says. "Vengeance is mine," saith thy God; aye, and mine!

Before his prison door for days I sat and taunted him with slow death and into his dying ears poured curses and hate, so that when he died, he sprang up and shrieked—and so clutching—died!

On the altar above him his child, thy brother, was slain—Thinkest thou I knew it? No, no, not I! Weep not, pretty child, thou shalt not long be motherless in Sheol, if thy blind mother can follow thy way. I have drunk of the beaker of hate, ha, ha! and found it sweet, sweet as the chalice of love thy father once filled for me long ago!—I go to deliver the man whom thou lovest, and the woman thou hatest into the hands of destruction, so that guiltless they die, and when thou journeyest alone down to Sheol thine eyes may look off and see them together in Paradise, and so seeing, thy Hell will flame up anew—Farewell!"

* * * * * * * * *

Joseph, thou son of Elim, Hilkah, the old, has taken her beak from my heart and has gone. I sit in my prison and look off over the hills. I see the sun sinking low—the last sun I shall ever behold. Again will it rise, a thousand times rise, but I shall not see it. Others will see its glory tingeing the morning skies, reddening the eastern gates of the world, but I shall see it no more! A few short days ago I was a happy child, with no other thought than to sing to my aged mother, and to gather the roses of summer, and to whisper to the stars of winter. Alas now, I look at my hands, and lo they are red! I look down to my feet, and lo they are covered with blood, and the sun going down on my unpurified robes! Alas, what a change! These fingers which had never swept anything more rude than a lute, have held and guided a dagger! But the sun sinks low and soon I must

go to the bar of that Judgment where a just God sits. Beware of Hilkah, the old. She seeks thy destruction. In other lands may thou and thy love live long and be blest. Forgive her who wrought thee evil; her love for thee was a mighty thing and blinded the light of her soul. Before thou camest, her heart was light and her hands were busied with the loom and the distaff, but they shall be silent henceforth forever in the desolate home, where sits the widowed mother, calling, crying unto Him to give back her only child! In Heaven * * * * * * (Here the parchment had stains of blood upon it, and it seemed as though tears had fallen over it, so it could not be read, then it ended with)—The sun sinks low. I have watched for some trusty eunuch to carry this message, but * * Alas the priest is come for the sacrifice! No more on earth! Farewell!

MARTHA."

* * * * * *

And thus the heart-break on earth was ended, but who shall say on that other shore it may not be changed to notes of glad song? Who shall say that in His providence, somehow, or somewhere, in that mysterous hereafter, she may not after all yet meet with that love where comes no heart-break nor parting? Let us hope.

THE END.

ISRAEL.

Tribe of the restless soul and weary feet,
Whose caravans encamped by Babel's wall,
And bought and sold their wares in every street
From Cabul unto far-off Neapol,
Thy thrift, thy craft a by-word is and name,
Since Jacob stole red Esau's birth-right fame.

Earth's dynasties were reared and sunk again,
Cities were built o'er other cities, dead,
But these strange Israelitish tribes of men
Still walk the earth with never ending tread,
As though forever bent on distant quest
To Egypt, Sheba, Dedan or the West.

Without a home, a Nation or a land,
In never ending strife for worldly worth,
Against them every man with lifted hand,
The brand of Cain upon them from their birth,
Unfaltering in their faith as Moses trod,
They wait the turn of destiny and God.

Jerusalem their nation's queen betrayed,
By Infidels their sacred soil is trod,
The Moslem curse forever on them laid,
Still with a calm repose in Israel's God,

Across the years, all wondrous and sublime,
Their faith lives on above the flight of time.

They hear the summoning call of Israel's race,
They see the rushing horse of Zion there;
The starlight of the years upon their face,
They see the flashing sword of Gideon bare,
The tossing plumes and banners in the sun,
Jerusalem's fallen towers and victory won!

The marbles of old Nineveh exhumed
From age-long dust and dark damp clinging mould
Are relics prized of that strange nation doomed,
But these were chiselling Petra's caverned hold
When Nineveh's mute stones were still asleep
In marble hills down many a stairway deep.

Like banded Saturn swung in starry space,
With worlds half-formed within creation's mould,
Has God preserved the remnant of their race,
To show His wondrous power in ages old,
The ever-burning bush on Sinai's side,
Consumed not, lost not, changed not, glorified!

Whether it be engraved on scriptured stone
Of Egypt or of ruined Babylon,
Their tell-tale face forever stands alone,
Whether of Balbec or of Gibeon,
The shibboleth which marks their Nation's place,
As though 'twere writ upon their very face.

I look into the eyes of those who keep
Their little stalls in yon dim-crowded street
And see the Jewish face of those who sleep
In Palestine, or e'er they once more meet
The brother whom their malice basely sold
To merchants, journeying Egyptward of old.

The dark eyes of their daughters when in song
Glance brightly as of old did Miriam's eyes,
When she and her fair maidens danced along
And rang the timbrel loud, when all the cries

Of Pharaoh's host were hushed beneath the tide,
Of that red drowning sea o'er Egypt's pride.

Sweet Ruth still stands amid the golden corn
In many a Hebrew maiden far from home,
And many a blessed Ada night and morn
Awaits the tread of Jephthah, glad to roam
An exile on the earth, or gladly give
Her life if her loved Israel still may live.

But thou hast passed to Mammon through the fire,
Thy greed for gold is in thy yellow face
And avarice bequeathed to son from sire,
Till Shylocks, all, have grown the very race
Who once were kings and lords by Canaan's rills
And plucked the red-ripe fruit from Judah's hills!

Here, here, where shook the ark 'twixt cherubim,
And Zion's rushing horse by Jordan's wave
Have flung their banners bright above the dim
Dead past of years, rise, Gideon, from thy grave,
Or Maccabeus from thy silent lands
And burst the chains which bind thy country's hands!

NOTES.

NOTE I. Certain friends have already told me that I should have chosen a different title for my book. Allow me to say, that none other could have been chosen, besides, whoever will take the pains to read the chief work which deals with the Wandering Jew in fiction. The Romance of Eugene Sue, will discover that there is not even the remotest resemblance between the treatment of the subject by that great author and that of myself. His, deals with the fortunes of an illustrious French name, and the scenes are laid in and about Paris. I had not read the book however, till the forgoing pages were in print. I would recommend the work, however, to any who take interest in the subject.

NOTE II. Anticipating the thought that I might be criticised because of the misfortunes which fall upon Martha, who is certainly the stronger and more womanly of the two chief female characters in the foregoing work, I would say, that in the Romance of Ivanhoe, esteemed by many the most excellent of the writings of Sir Walter Scott, that great writer found it necessary in a note to his work to defend himself because of the fortunes which befell the Jewess Rebecca, who, notwithstanding the chief character, the Lady Rowena, is certainly the heroine of that wonderful tale. If there are those who feel that another and better fortune should have befallen the maiden Martha, allow me to say, that in this world, if virtue and honor and truth and excellence be not their own reward, often there is none other.

NOTE III. In justice to my readers, I should here say, that belief in the returning of the Star of Bethlehem, which many have looked forward to for some years past, has no foundation whatever in astronomical circles—there can be no such star. I can account for this widespread belief in no other way than that it must possess some connection with the return of a variable star in the constellation Cassiopeia, which should fall on or about the present time. That star appeared to the Danish astronomer, Tycho Brahe, in 1574, and was visible for 20 months, then slowly disappeared—It was said to have become brighter than the planet Venus and to have been visible even at mid-day—Counting backwards, this star seems to have been the same as one which appeared at intervals of 315 years from the remotest recorded times. It should have been visible during the past year, 1890, but so far has not been seen. Counting forwards, its appearance would nearly coincide with six returns since the birth of Christ.

NOTE IV. Now that this work is written, and I am able to look back over it with passive judgment, I feel that I must express a regret at the fate which was thrust upon the daughter of Jephthah. In this I am not alone. Many before me have framed excuses for the sacrifice of that lovely maiden—It is one of the saddest instances in all the Bible and one which the champions of religion have sought in vain to justify. I do not believe there ever was such a sacrifice, and if there were, a just God never sanctioned it. My nature revolts at the thought. I believe it is born of tradition, handed down from the days of Sun-worship when human sacrifices were laid on the altar of Baal. Even as barbarous as were the time of Jephthah, I cannot believe that the Hebrew religion would sanction such an offering.

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